Edited by Farish A. Noor and Peter Carey

Racial Difference and the Colonial Wars of 19th Century Southeast Asia

Amsterdam University Press

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of 19th Century Southeast Asia

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Introduction

Why Race Mattered: Racial Difference, Racialized Colonial Capitalism and the Racialized Wars of Nineteenth-Century Colonial Southeast Asia

Farish A. Noor and Peter Carey

Abstract
This collection of essays revisits the colonial wars that were fought across Southeast Asia throughout the nineteenth century and studies them through the lenses of racial difference as it was understood at the time. The authors have chosen to bring to the fore the manner in which understandings of racial identity and difference were instrumental in the way in which the colonial powers viewed their local adversaries, and argue that the wars that were fought during that century need to be understood as race wars as well. In the course of these conflicts – some small and some on a much larger scale – essentialised and reductive racial identities were also being constructed; and in some instances borrowed and internalised by the native Southeast Asian communities as well.

Keywords: racial difference, race war, colonialism, Southeast Asia

The image of hatred and of the other, the foreigner is neither the romantic victim of our clannish indolence nor the intruder responsible for all the ills of the polis. […] Strangely, the foreigner lives within us, he is the hidden face of our identity.[1]
– Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*

Like Ovid, *I'll have no last words*. This is what it means to die among barbarians. *Bar bar bar* was how the Greeks heard our speech – sheep, beasts – and so we became *barbarians*. We make them reveal the brutes they are, Aleph, by the things we make them name.
– Solmaz Sharif, *Persian Letters*

1 Kristeva 1991: 1.

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Blood *Is* Thicker: Racial Difference and the Colonial Wars of Nineteenth-Century Southeast Asia

Night is here but the barbarians have not come.
And some people arrived from the borders,
and said that there are no longer any barbarians.
And now what shall become of us without any barbarians?
Those people were some kind of solution.
– Constantine P. Cavafy, 'Waiting for the Barbarians'

Wars and invasions were nothing new to the region that is now known as Southeast Asia. As far back as the eleventh and twelfth centuries several kingdoms of Southeast Asia had come under attack by successive rulers of the South Indian Tamil Chola Empire – notably during the reigns of Rajendra Chola I (r. 1014-1044), Virarajendra Chola (r. 1063-1070) and Kulothunga Chola I (r. 1070-1122) – and as a consequence of these incursions the Sumatran kingdom of Srivijaya and the kingdom of Kadaram (present-day Kedah) in the Malay Peninsula were subsequently weakened. In 1293 Kublai Khan sent a large expedition against the Javanese kingdom of Singhasari, though the venture ended in failure and proved to be the last overseas expedition sent by the khan, while in its wake the thalassocratic kingdom of Mahapahit would emerge as the dominant power in Java. Southeast Asia's kingdoms would be at war with one another and on the defensive against external interventions by stronger powers from outside the region from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries; and when the Portuguese and Spanish arrived they would be among many other powers vying for dominance in the region – though the Portuguese would learn that the kingdoms of Southeast Asia were not so easily defeated, as in the case of the kingdom of Malacca, which put up a stiff fight when Alfonso de Albuquerque's force of 1,200 men tried to overwhelm the port city in 1511.[2]

Wars would continue in and across Southeast Asia even after the arrival of the first Europeans, for several Southeast Asian kingdoms were locked in

2 According to the records kept by the son of Alfonso de Albuquerque (1453-1515), Alfonso the Younger (Bras de Albuquerque, 1500-1580), the Malaccans had developed to become a formidable power by the early sixteenth century. He noted that after the bombardment of Malacca the Portuguese had captured 3,000 pieces of artillery, out of an estimated total of 8,000 which the Malaccans had. (Alfonso de Albuquerque the Younger 1995: 127). See Alfonso de Albuquerque the Younger, *Commentários do Grande Alfonso de Albuquerque* (1576), chaps 22-28 in Alfonso de Albuquerque the Younger 1995.

a prolonged struggle for supremacy over their rivals: The kingdom of Aceh during the time of Sultan Iskandar Muda (r. 1607-1636) fought not only the Portuguese, who were then installed in Malacca (1629), but also other native Southeast Asian powers including Deli (1612), Johor (1613), Pahang (1617) and Kedah (1619-1620). The contestation between the Burmese and the kingdom of Ayutthaya culminated in the invasion of the latter's territory in 1766-1767 and led to the ruinous destruction of Ayutthaya (in 1767), whose libraries and palaces were burned to the ground. The Burmese in turn were forced to repair to their own territory soon after their victory as a result of renewed conflict with China.

Just beyond the fluid borders of Southeast Asia British and French interests could be seen at work as the European powers struggled to gain a foothold in South and Southeast Asia. A decade before Ayutthaya was put to the torch by the Burmese, the British East India Company – through the workings of Robert Clive (1725-1774) – would score a decisive victory against the Nawab of Bengal Siraj-ud Daulah (1733-1757) and his French allies at the Battle of Palashi (1757). Britain's campaign in Bengal took place in the middle of the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) in Europe, qualifying the continental war as perhaps the first world war. But it is also interesting to note that Britain and France – while trying hard to secure a presence in the Indian subcontinent – were also working closely with local Bengali leaders like Siraj-ud Daulah and Syed Mir Jafar Ali Khan Bahadur (1691-1765), who would later defect to the British side. Meanwhile in Java, the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, VOC) had capitalized on the Third Javanese War of Succession of 1746-1757 between the last Mataram ruler, Pakubuwono II (r. 1726-1749), and his teenage son, Pakubuwono III (r. 1749-1788), on one side, and the two rebellious princes, Raden Mas Said (later Mangkunegoro I, r. 1757-1795) and Mangkubumi (r. 1749-1792), on the other. This led to the division (on 13 February 1755) of the kingdom of Mataram into the two kingdoms of Surakarta and Jogjakarta (Yogyakarta), with the semi-autonomous Mangkunegaran principality in Surakarta being added on 17 March 1757 as a fief for Said/Mangkunegoro.

What is interesting about these conflicts that took place between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries is that they reveal several aspects of Southeast Asia's complexity to the modern reader. During the initial clashes between the first Europeans and Southeast Asians, the former did not enjoy the advantage of superior weaponry and technology that they would have later in the nineteenth century, as made clear in the writings of Alfonso de Albuquerque the Younger, who noted that the guns of Malacca were as

good as the guns of early-sixteenth-century Germany.[3] The British, French, Dutch and other Europeans were willing to form strategic alliances with their South and Southeast Asian counterparts, as the racial distinctions that would grow more pronounced in the nineteenth century were not as prevalent then. This relaxed attitude towards ethnic difference can also be seen in how the British, Dutch and Spanish in Asia were not disinclined to marry into local communities and create mestizo populations, such as the Anglo-Indians of Bengal, the Indo-Europeans of Java or the Spanish mestizos of the Philippines. Much of this was set to change in the nineteenth century as European attitudes towards Asians and Africans would alter with the rise of scientific racism and theories of racial-biological difference.

The nineteenth century witnessed the spread of Western influence over almost the whole of Southeast Asia. With very few exceptions like Siam and Sulu, most of the independent kingdoms and states of the region came under some form of colonial rule in this period. Though much has been written about the two World Wars of the subsequent century, many tend to overlook the fact that the nineteenth century was the most significant for the polities and nations of Southeast Asia. It was then that the region was eviscerated by a series of violent colonial wars – as can be seen in the chronology at the end of this book. These incurred not only a huge cost in life and property, but also led almost everywhere to the extinction of local sovereignties. A cursory overview of Southeast Asian history reveals a catalogue of conflicts involving European imperial powers in a sustained series of wars which stretched in a bloody arc from the first truly global conflict engendered by the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1792-1815), when Java became a battleground, through the Java War (1825-1830) and the near contemporaneous First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-1826) to the 'War on Piracy' fought off the coast of Borneo in the 1840s, which reduced Brunei to a British protectorate in all but name. After the mid-century celebration of Britain's industrial nation status at the 1851 Crystal Palace Exhibition, the arc of conflict stretched through the Second and Third Anglo-Burmese Wars (1852-1853, 1885), the French invasion of Cochinchina (1858), the Franco-Siamese War of 1893, and the bloody coda of the Philippine-American War of 1899-1902.

The 'rush for empire', engendered by the energies unleashed by Europe's twin industrial and political revolutions of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, was a truly global phenomenon. It extended from Africa to Asia, and speed was its essence. As Darwin has noted, 'there was

3 Ibid.: 127.

almost no time for native peoples to reorganize politically, redeploy socially, form wider alliances or develop more effective military tactics. This is why the rushes were so important.[4] And this rush for empire was facilitated by Europe's growing economic and technological prowess. These in turn translated into huge capital surpluses and an increasingly powerful arsenal of weaponry which could be deployed throughout the globe. Targeted at the Asian 'Others', their combined firepower proved ineluctable. Within a brief century nearly all Asia would come under their control, as Darwin reminds us:

> Greater Europe's expansion into Afro-Asian lands too remote or resistant in earlier times seemed a tribute to its scientific and technological primacy. The 'knowledge gap' between Europeans and others looked wider, not narrower, by the end of the [nineteenth] century. Parts of Europe were entering the second industrial revolution of electricity and chemicals before the non-Western world had [even] exploited coal and steam.[5]

Caught by thunderclap surprise, the nations of Southeast Asia were outrun by the European Prometheus. Unable to modernize in time, they could not keep pace with the advances of Western science and technology. By the mid-nineteenth century some of the Southeast Asian powers were able to develop or acquire weapons, machinery and war matériel on a par with their European adversaries, but the loss of territories and trading networks essential for their economic survival undermined their capacity. Briefly put, they could not develop their own industrial power bases, and consequently lost the arms race against the West. By the time of the Second Anglo-Burmese War of 1852-1853, Burma possessed European-style vessels to defend itself against the might of the British Navy, but the loss of its coastline after Britain's initial 1826 annexations meant that it had lost its key ports. These losses in turn severely depleted the kingdom's commercial assets. But even if they had retained these coastal regions, there is a question as to whether the acquisition of naval assets alone would have tipped the scale in the Burmese favour. Much later, the far better resourced Qing government of China (1636-1912) would acquire state-of-the-art naval vessels to prepare for their military showdown with the Japanese. But they proved useless in the face of the professionally trained and modernized Japanese fleet during the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) when Qing naval commanders were found to

4 Darwin 2008: 256.

5 Ibid.: 298.

be wholly incompetent at engaging their ironclads in seaborne encounters with their British-trained adversary. The acquisition of technology alone without the mental capacity to understand and deploy this technology in battlefield situations was an exercise in delusion.

Meanwhile, in Southeast Asia proper the nineteenth century was the era when the region was gradually being colonized, mapped and defined for posterity with Southeast Asians playing little part in this process. The rulers of the region would eventually be deposed or bypassed altogether – as in the case of several rulers in the Malay kingdoms whose power was compromised by the colonial Resident system – and by the last quarter of the nineteenth century colonial intervention would extend all the way to places like Aceh at the northernmost tip of Sumatra. In due course those who came under colonial rule (both direct and indirect) like ancien régime (pre-1789) French taxpayers were treated as all but irrelevant – 'on parle de vous, chez vous, sans vous' ('we speak about you, in your house, without you'), as the witty French philosopher critical of monarchical despotism, Voltaire (1694-1778), would put it. Half a world away in Southeast Asia, the subjects of the new colonial states were deemed an irrelevance as the European colonial powers began dividing up their respective territories. How could it be otherwise? This was a century where the power and economic differentials between East and West would grow, an era when the communities of Southeast Asian were no longer able to match the military capabilities of the Western world. It was a century when rifled muskets, machine guns and Congreve rockets – first used in Southeast Asia during the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-1826) – would be deployed against blowpipes and *parangs*, and when *sampans* and *prahus* confronted armoured gunboats.

The essays contained in this book revisit the colonial wars of nineteenth-century Southeast Asia. But they do not simply describe those wars from a military history perspective. Accounts of the conquest and colonization of Southeast Asia are plentiful. They date back to the nineteenth century itself and gave rise to a specific European literary heritage which spawned the adventure novels of Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) and G.A. Henty (1832-1902). As Southeast Asia came under the sword those who wielded it were themselves engaged in the process of discursively re-presenting the history that they were themselves shaping. In the historian Bartlett's words, 'all conquest literature seeks to explain to the conquerors "why we are here"'.[6] Such works range from the dry-as-dust *History of the Indian Archipelago* (1820), penned by John Crawfurd (1783-1868), to grand compilations with nary a hint of

6 Bartlett 1993: 96.

violence, like Raffles's *History of Java* (1817), to the more sanguinary accounts of the battles of colonial conquest such as Major John James Snodgrass's (1796-1841) *Narrative of the Burmese War* (1827). Written as they were by men who were themselves at the vanguard of empire-building, the respective subject-positions of the authors themselves went unmentioned. That these books were written by Westerners to give a Western account of a Western conquest for the benefit of a Western readership often meant that the racial identity of the authors (and their intended readers) was taken for granted or left unmentioned. In this echo chamber, the question of race and racial difference was conspicuously omitted. This omission is the inspiration for the current work.

This book brings together a number of essays that place race and racial difference at the centre of individual studies of the nineteenth-century colonial wars in Southeast Asia. Together they look at how essentialized and reductive were the understandings of racial difference. Often couched in the pseudo-scientific theories in vogue in late-nineteenth-century Europe, they were used to explain, rationalize and justify the wars of conquest which took place in Southeast Asia. They were also used to excuse or at least gloss over the excessive use of violence and employment of deadly weaponry.

Our contention in the present volume is that no discussion of the colonial wars of nineteenth-century Southeast Asia can begin without due reference to the politics of race and racial difference. Theories of racial difference and white supremacy were at the very heart of the empire-building process in the nineteenth century. They guided perceptions and policies as well as tactics, and they also predicted outcomes. Certainly, wars were fought all over the world during the nineteenth century: European powers engaged in their own major conflicts on the continent of Europe, and two of these – the Revolutionary Wars (1792-1799) and the Napoleonic Wars (1799-1802, 1803-1814, 1815), as mentioned earlier, had major global ramifications not least in Java. Others such as the Crimean War (1853-1856) together with the Austro-Prussian (1866) and Franco-Prussian Wars (1870-1871) were more restricted in scope to continental Europe and Turkey. But what made the colonial wars of Southeast Asia different was not only their ferocity, but the underlying belief that these were 'wars of civilization'. The adversarial Other was not an equal to the Western colonizer but an inferior both racially and culturally. The colonial wars of nineteenth-century Southeast Asia were thus not simply wars between rival powers, but also *race* wars. They were conceived, rationalized, fought or justified at times on the basis of racial ideas and understandings.

Such racial differences were, in the view of most participants in the nineteenth-century colonial project, essentialist and irreconcilable. It was not so much racism which had changed but the uses to which it was put. Indeed, the institutionalization of racism was permitted and fostered by the new nation states of nineteenth-century Europe. Class and racial distinctions were now given legal sanction by dividing populations into active and passive citizens, namely those who had the right to vote, based on property rights, and those who did not. In addition, there was a separate category of 'non-citizens', which comprised Jews, non-whites and foreigners. The French Revolution played a role here, quickening debates about whether free men of colour (descendants of freeborn Africans and Europeans) – the *gens de couleur libres* – should have full French citizenship. Granted by the French National Assembly on 15 May 1791, this concession soon rebounded, sparking a reaction from the poor whites (*petits blancs*) in the West Indies with both parties appealing to the local slave communities to support their cause. In February 1794, the National Convention – the French Republic's legislature under the radical leadership of Maximilien Robespierre (1758-1794) and the Jacobins – even voted for the abolition of slavery in France and its colonies. But less than a decade later this legislation had been rescinded by Napoleon as First Consul (1799-1804). His attempt to retain the loyalty of the lucrative sugar-producing islands of the French West Indies (Guadeloupe, Martinique and Saint-Domingue) by restoring the institution of slavery, backfired when a successful slave rebellion in Saint-Domingue (Hispaniola) resulted in the establishment of the first independent slave Republic of Haiti (1 January 1804), only recognized by France in 1825.

While Europeans may have been at war with each other, they were also at war with the rest of the world. However, leaving aside various specific minority groups like the European Jews, intra-European wars – in the nineteenth century at least – were not understood and represented on the same terms as Europe's colonial wars abroad. Europeans may have competed against each other in the race for global dominance, and the different nations of Western Europe certainly cultivated the belief that each of them possessed a cultural-ethnic identity that was superior to their continental rivals, but whatever intra-European animosity they had would be relegated to the background when they encountered the non-European Other abroad. How and why the diverse peoples of Southeast Asian were seen and cast as *races apart* is one of the underlying themes of this book. The volume's individual chapters seek to account for how the different communities of Southeast Asian were perceived, understood and discursively framed through the linked processes of mapping, categorization and reduction to essentialized

tropes and stereotypes, which happened before, during and after the bloody colonial wars. This work is therefore not simply a recounting of the colonial conflicts within Southeast Asia in the nineteenth century. It is rather a study of how racial difference was introduced and later reproduced via the mechanisms and modalities of colonial war making and identity framing.

When Racism Became a Science: Scientific Racism and Racialized Colonial Capitalism in the Nineteenth Century

> The existence of the disabled native is required for
> the next lie and the next and the next.[7]
> – Homi Bhabha, *Articulating the Archaic: Cultural Difference and Colonial Nonsense*

That societies tend to develop their own collective understanding of other societies and cultures is obvious. It is not an exceptional phenomenon as any society is bound to have its own understandings of its constitutive Other. At the same time, that Other can be framed in a myriad of ways. What is unique to the nineteenth century, however, is that the growing power and economic differentials between East and West soon weighted the balance heavily in the West's favour. As the nineteenth century progressed so did the race for empire. The attendant technologies and disciplines which cleared the path to empire followed closely in its wake. Among the most salient was the pseudo-scientific discipline later known as 'scientific racism'. This so-called 'science of race' was propagated by a host of scholars throughout the Western world. It was also instrumentalized by policymakers, colonial capitalists and colony builders across much of Asia and Africa. Stakeholders and benefactors of the slave trade in antebellum America were amongst its strongest supporters.

Long before colonial gunboats sailed up the creeks and rivers of Southeast Asia, the framing of Southeast Asia as the dialectical constitutive Other to the Western world was already in place. Indeed, historians like Bartlett have argued that such praxes of exclusion and Othering can be dated back to medieval Europe.[8] In Bartlett's view, they were linked to the rise of the kingdoms and nations which dominated the western extremity of the Eurasian land mass in the late medieval period (1200-1500). Centuries before

7 Bhabha 1994: 183.
8 Bartlett 1993.

Southeast Asians were seen and cast as lazy, backward and violent such descriptions were already being used by Europeans against their own. In Bartlett's words:

> The images of exclusion and otherness available to those who formed and expressed opinions in twelfth-century western Europe included not only the dichotomy Christian/non-Christian but also that of civilized/barbarian, and the two polarities were often mutually reinforcing. The Welsh were [depicted as] 'rude and untamed', [...] the Ruthenians [...] were associated with other 'primitive Slavs' and 'wild peoples' of 'uncivilized barbarism'.[9]

The arrival of the Europeans in nineteenth-century Southeast Asia saw seasoned colonizers landing in new pastures. Tried and tested strategies of domination and exclusion were now deployed again, only this time against an Other that was strikingly different from the 'wild peoples' of the Western European periphery: 'The mental habits and institutions of [later] European racism and colonialism were born in the medieval world. [...] The European Christians who sailed to the coasts of the Americas, Asia and Africa came from a society that was already a colonizing society.'[10]

White has noted how such attitudes, when re-enacted in the context of Africa and Asia, contributed to a paradox: the impulse both to defeat and 'save' the non-Western Other. At the same time, it foregrounded as its foundational premise the idea that anything that the West did was justifiable and necessary. This was rooted in the belief that a specifically European 'type of humanity' was the only one that mattered:

> From the Renaissance to the end of the eighteenth century, Europeans tended to fetishize the native peoples with whom they came into contact by viewing them simultaneously as monstrous forms of humanity and as quintessential objects of desire. Whence the alternative impulse to exterminate and to redeem native peoples. But even more basic in the European consciousness of this time was the tendency to fetishize the European type of humanity as the sole form that humanity in general could take.[11]

9 Ibid.: 23.
10 Ibid.: 313-314.
11 White 1978: 194-195.

It was against this backdrop of exclusion and Othering that Europe's nineteenth-century encounters with Southeast Asians were framed. Here it has to be noted that Europeans had been in South, East and Southeast Asia since the sixteenth century, and during that earlier period of prolonged contact and commercial exchange had understood that they were but one community among many. As Chaudhuri has shown, the world of the Indian Ocean was, from the rise of Islam to the eighteenth century, a complex tapestry of ethnic, linguistic and religious groups/communities that straddled the expanse of a poly-centred Asian continent.[12] The various communities of Asia were already internally differentiated, and Europeans came to learn of the complicated modes of ethnic and subethnic classification employed by the Mughals, Manchus, Japanese and so on. The change that took place in the nineteenth century occurred when the earlier (and perhaps more respectful) understanding of difference was replaced by a more hierarchical worldview predicated on a very Western understanding of racial difference. The notion that the human race was not a singular one, but rather divided into separate races had a venerable pedigree. During the European Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, it was also supported by the theory of polygenesis backed by influential thinkers like Voltaire. But the polygenetic theory underwent a rapid evolution in the nineteenth century when European and American power was at its zenith. At this time the transition from slave-based economies to wage labour was in process and a form of hybridity developed as the new scientific racism in the nineteenth century came to be articulated by Western scholars, who not only supported the continued practice of slavery, but also encouraged the acquisition of foreign territories to serve the needs of colonial capitalism.

The militarized East India Companies of Western Europe were at the forefront of this colonial capitalist project. Led by Company men like John Crawfurd and Stamford Raffles, colony building and wealth accumulation went hand-in-hand. A firm believer in the theory of polygenesis, Crawfurd was convinced that Asians and Europeans were in fact separate 'races'. He also rejected outright Darwin's idea of evolution and castigated *The Origin of Species* as little more than a 'collection of facts'.[13] Close to the end of his life in the late 1860s, he reiterated his belief in racial hierarchies in his essay 'On the Physical and Mental Characteristics of the European and Asiatic Races of Man'.[14] Insisting that Asians could never develop to the same

12 Chaudhuri 1990.
13 Knapman 2017: 233.
14 Crawfurd 1867.

advanced and civilized level as Westerners, Crawfurd derided Asian art and music as 'miserable' and 'inferior'.[15] In his earlier writings on Southeast Asia, Burma, and Siam and Cochinchina,[16] Crawfurd had mapped the whole of Southeast Asia in racialized terms. Drawing a racial map of the region as a bioscape, he divided Southeast Asia into five distinct zones inhabited by Southeast Asians who were ranked from the 'almost civilized' to those who were thought to be downright 'savage and primitive'. Such ideas were echoed in Continental Europe by men like Georges Cuvier (1769-1832) and Joseph Arthur de Gobineau (1816-1882), who likewise regarded the human race not as a singular species but rather as different races.

Across the Atlantic in the United States men like the Philadelphia-born physician, Samuel George Morton (1799-1851), and the slave-owning doctor, Josiah C. Nott (1804-1873), sought support in the Old Testament. They claimed that biblical accounts of Adam referred only to Caucasians. Samuel Morton's influence on the development of the American school of ethnography and scientific racism was considerable. His creationist account of human development rejected Darwinian evolution theory. This in turn lent support to the claims of men like Nott who argued that slavery could be justified on both religious and scientific grounds. 'Inferior' races, in Nott's view, would be better able to achieve their full potential in a condition of servitude.[17] In universities like Harvard, the Swiss-American biologist, Louis Agassiz (1807-1873), forwarded the theory of racial difference, which Agassiz and his fellow academicians had drawn from American scientific racism. This in turn could be traced back to Morton, who had argued that the African and Asiatic 'races' were distinct from the white race to which they belonged, an idea that had considerable support in the European colonies in Southeast Asia.[18]

Feeble though these arguments may seem to the contemporary reader today, scientific racism was deemed a respectable 'science' during its time, and a useful one as well. As an instrumental fiction that helped give a gloss of respectability to the colonial enterprise such 'scientific' theories of racial difference – and, in particular, how it ranked the various races of humankind according to a hierarchy that placed superior races at the top and inferior races at the bottom – helped justify the acquisition of territories abroad on the grounds of a mission to civilize humanity and suppress the

15 Siew 2018: 224-225, 226.
16 Crawfurd 1820, 1829, 1830.
17 Horsman 1987.
18 Fredrickson 1972.

primitive and primordial. If native communities in Asia and Africa were being mowed down by volleys of rifle fire and machine guns, blasted with rockets and gunboats, it was deemed necessary and expedient – as the same rules of civilized combat did not apply to those deemed uncivilized and who fought back in an unconventional, asymmetrical manner. (Though again it ought to be remembered that this distinction was rather late in coming, and that up to the Napoleonic wars in Europe guerilla tactics and attacks on non-military targets had also occurred, especially during the Peninsula campaign [1807-1814] and Napoleon's ill-fated ventures in Egypt [1798-1801] and Russia [1812].) Theories of racial difference were thus not merely academic and speculative accoutrements for the Western elite of the nineteenth century: it was at the heart of empire building and also a catalyst for further exploration, innovation and colonization. Race was never an afterthought.

Why Race Matters: The Racialized Conflicts of Nineteenth-Century Southeast Asia and Their Legacies, Then and Now

> To deny the importance of colonialism and imperialism is to ignore the history of the third world, and this is theoretically and politically unacceptable.[19]
> – Kuan-Hsing Chen, *Asia as Method*

The wars waged in and across Southeast Asia in the nineteenth century were numerous and varied. At times they were also fought between the Southeast Asian polities themselves. The kingdoms of Siam and Burma, for example, were at war for much of this century. This was a time when Siam became diplomatically allied to Britain, thus strengthening the hand of the Chakri court as Britain completed its annexation of Burmese territory in the Second and Third Anglo-Burmese Wars (1852-1853, 1885). From all-out invasions to gunboat actions – sometimes referred to as 'policing actions/exercises' – the colonial wars also involved native levies and troops from other parts of Southeast Asia and beyond. This was the case with Britain's invasion and occupation of Java from 1811 to 1816, which relied on Bengal and Madras sepoys from the Indian subcontinent courtesy of the British East India Company. In the Dutch East Indies a similar mindset was at work as Dutch colonial administrators designated certain native 'races' – such as the Ambonese and Manadonese – as being more 'martial' and thus suited

19 Chen 2010: 22.

for military service, and were subsequently co-opted into the Dutch colonial army (it helped that many of these troops from the eastern archipelago were from Christian communities).

As a result of these conflicts Southeast Asian society was profoundly altered. This happened on many levels and in different ways and registers. The trope of the belligerent native Other, so commonly used as a means to justify colonial military actions, would later become part of the narrative of native identity and racial difference. Different modes of warfare – employed by Westerners and Southeast Asians alike – would eventually be compared and ranked. A new pecking order of 'martial races' came into being with native modes of military organization and resistance being studied in detail. They would later be classified and ranked according to a hierarchy in which 'superior' and 'inferior' societies and cultures were now differentiated. Native understandings of territoriality – in particular, the attachment to the sea and rivers as part of the landscape and the local understanding of homeland – would eventually be superseded by Eurocentric Westphalian understandings of land-space and 'national' political territory. But the colonial wars did not merely disrupt the political and economic life of Southeast Asians; they also changed the way in which Southeast Asians saw the world. This profoundly altered their own self-perceptions. This can perhaps be seen most clearly in Java, where a deeply militarized pre-colonial society and culture was transformed into a bureaucratic state (*beambtenstaat*) following the Dutch victory in the Java War (1825-1830). Just how these changes came about, and the consequences of the changes that followed, are the themes taken up by the authors of this book.

In the first chapter Peter Carey looks at the brutal shift from the Javanese 'old order' to the new 'high colonial' period (1816-1942) in the seventeen years from the coming of Marshal Herman Willem Daendels (1808-1811) to the Java War (1825-1830). In this brief period Javanese society was turned on its head. New concepts of honour, status, patriarchy and racial superiority were introduced from a Europe transformed by the twin industrial and political revolutions of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This led to the marginalization of hitherto empowered elite women and members of the local Islamic communities, both of whom would play a significant role in the Java War. One of the most salient manifestations of this shift was the introduction of military uniforms to demarcate rank and status. Henceforth, service to the colonial state would transcend nobility of birth and spiritual authority. Through outright plunder, despoliation and military violence the indigenous courts of south-central Java were eviscerated. At the same time, a new highway was opened for Western capital through

the lease of royal lands and territorial annexations, while racial tensions were fuelled by the use of Chinese as tollgate keepers (*bandar tol*) and tax farmers. This provoked an anti-Chinese pogrom at the start of the Java War vividly illustrated in the Java War diaries of two Belgians, the first of whom witnessed the outbreak of the war at first hand in Yogyakarta, and the second fought as a mobile column commander. This latter account gives a remarkable insight into the racialized world of the Netherlands East Indies and the ways in which colonial wars were conducted using native auxiliaries (*hulptroepen*) from the 'Outer Islands' (islands outside Java), in particular, Madura, Maluku and Sulawesi (Celebes), each of whom in the view of this Belgian commander had their own qualities as fighting men.

The second chapter shifts our attention from Java to Borneo as Farish A. Noor looks at the discursive construction of the colonial trope of the 'warlike' Dayak that was the result of the so-called 'war on piracy' along the north coast of Borneo. This campaign would eventually lead to the defeat of the kingdom of Brunei and the loss of Sarawak to the forces of James Brooke and the British Navy by 1846. Noor links the development of the trope of the 'primitive warlike Dayak' to the broader image-idea of the 'Bornean pirate', and how such instrumental fictions were used not only to justify Britain's acts of military intervention in that particular theatre of conflict, but to help frame the relationship between Westerners and native communities. Occurring at a time when pseudo-scientific theories of racial difference and racial hierarchies were beginning to gain currency among colonial administrators, such reductive notions of native identity proved to be useful in campaigns such as the 'war on piracy' and even after. Noor looks at how the image of the 'savage Dayak', once established and sedimented, would be put to use again and again not only in Britain's expansion across Borneo but would later be re-used out of context, in instances of lazy journalism or for entertainment value. He argues that the net result of this constant repetition of the reductive trope of the savage Dayak was the creation of a signifier that came to represent more than just an array of different ethnic groups, but also became a symbol of native violence itself. So strong would this association grow over time that the same reductive-Orientalist trope would continue to be repeated even after the end of empire, as the exoticized image of the Dayak as warring headhunter found itself reproduced in tourist advertising campaigns and the popular media.

Yvonne Tan's chapter looks at how the Mat Salleh Rebellion in North Borneo in 1894-1905, led by a *datu* with ties to the Sulu Sultanate, challenged both the British North Borneo Company and the way in which indigenous resistance was conceptualized. This became clear when the Company

established its jurisdiction over North Borneo in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Borrowing heavily from the British East India Company's racial categorization in the Malay Peninsula, the chapter argues that despite the involvement of diverse tribes and communities in the rebellion, there was a clear demarcation of those who were 'in the likeness of a Malay' or 'in the likeness of a Chinese', as well as Muslim or Pagan, coastal or inland, pirates or headhunters. Mat Salleh's followers, who were initially framed as outlawed Bajao and Suluk pirates, quickly defied these rigid labels. Despite the unreliability of the Company's racial logic, the chapter analyses how the Company continued to frame the rebellion through the narrow lens of racial categories. This in turn informed the Company's response to the rebellion, as exemplified by the Company's massacre of Bajaos towards the end of the revolt. Notwithstanding the efforts of Mat Salleh and the people he led, this binary took hold in the postcolonial national rhetoric of there being three dominant races – Malay, Chinese and Indian – while the capacity of the people of North Borneo and their distinctive cultures, customs, identities and histories continues to remain largely unrecognized.

Turning next to mainland Southeast Asia and the Franco-Siamese War of 1893, David M. Malitz's chapter first investigates the history of 'race' in Europe focusing on the development of the idea in France. It shows how despite claiming to be a scientific and thus an unambiguous term, 'race' acquired an increasing number of meanings over the centuries. In the late nineteenth century, 'race' could refer essentially to any group of people ranging from dynasties and small tribes via 'nations' to one of three assumed large global populations differentiated by their skin colour. What did not change was the political nature of the term, legitimizing unequal access to economic resources and power due to birth. The chapter then moves to the French colonial project in Southeast Asia. Here, French colonialists employed Orientalist stereotypes to delegitimize Siamese rule due to its 'Asian' nature while simultaneously differentiating between the Lao and Siamese races. Following the Franco-Siamese War of 1893, consular jurisdiction was extended to residents of the kingdom of Siam who had Lao or Khmer ethnicity in an attempt to undermine the Siamese state. This was problematic for the Siamese rulers as they had indeed traditionally claimed that the Lao of northern and north-eastern Siam were not Thai. They responded to this threat of indirect colonization by introducing a Thai racial and national identity that included the Laos of Siam but excluded the Laos of French Indochina. Embracing racial ideology also meant having to adopt the idea that the Thai belonged to the yellow-skinned Asian or Mongol race. In response to early criticism by an emergent middle class in

the kingdom, the Orientalist stereotypes leveraged in the colonial states against self-rule were also employed in early-twentieth-century Siam to reject demands for political participation. Following the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), however, this line of argument became increasingly weak. Critics embraced an Asian racial identity and pointed to Japan arguing that the status of the empire recognized as an equal by the colonial powers was due to its constitutional regime.

Netusha Naidu's chapter argues that much of the existing literature on the Pahang Civil War between 1891 and 1895 seeks to explain the events from the perspective of the British colonial administration and their fixed conceptions of what constitutes as traditional Malay politics and characteristics. Her chapter looks at the news reports of the time that showcase recurrent themes such as downplaying the situation in Pahang as a 'little' or 'petty' war, the debasement of Malay rebels and the inevitability of a colonial victory. In the chapter she argues that control of print discourse was insufficient to conceal the failures of the colonial administration in Pahang and thus nonviolent strategies that struck at the heart of traditional Malay political values were utilized in an effort to compromise the dignity of the rebels. The chapter also looks at the role of colonial fiction in the remaking of memories of the Pahang Civil War. Through a close reading of Hugh Clifford's *A Prince of Malaya* (1926), Naidu shows how the novel perpetuates myths based upon subjective documentation of events that took place during the rebellion. She argues that despite the British colonial administration's attempt to develop a consistent narrative to protect its growing interests in Pahang, there are arguments for the 'incalculability' and 'hybridity' of Malay figures like Sultan Ahmad and Dato' Bahaman during the Pahang Civil War, which in turn disrupt the attempts to construct and reproduce the colonial trope of the 'lazy native'.

In the next chapter, historian Brian Shott begins with a puzzle long known to scholars of the Philippine-American War (1899-1902), namely, the letters and diaries written by US troops in the conflict. These often show a dramatic change in outlook towards Filipinos in the space of just a few months in 1898-1899. When the United States declared war on Spain and all its territories in 1898 in a jingoistic fury over Spanish atrocities in Cuba, across the world Filipino patriots allied briefly with US troops and together fought Spanish forces around Manila. American soldiers during this time described Filipinos positively, but their diary entries quickly flipped to virulent, race-based abhorrence after the United States annexed the Philippines on 10 December 1898 and the rebels fought their new occupiers in a guerilla war for national self-determination in 1899-1902. Shott asks, how can racial constructions be so powerful and yet so ephemeral? Focusing

on new scholarship on the American West, he emphasizes the multiplicity of racial conceptions that American soldiers, politicians and entrepreneurs carried with them abroad. At the close of the American Civil War (1861-1865), debates about US citizenship for ex-slaves brought into complex interplay the imagined racial characteristics of Caucasians, African Americans, Chinese and Native Americans, along with beliefs about Protestantism, Catholicism and paganism. The multiracial nature of US troops – nearly 6,000 black troops fought in the war – and the resulting potential for African American and Filipino solidarity troubled US imperialists, while a fiery Irish Catholic press saw in attempts to 'Christianize' the already-Catholic Filipino populace a reflection of Irish Americans' own unstable status in America. Shott argues that fault lines in American identity – including white supremacist notions that could both embolden or inhibit US expansion – consistently determined the shape of the American empire. Race in this complicated landscape was an ever-present but constantly changing frame of reference used by multiple actors to further their goals.

Remaining in the Philippines, the concluding chapter by Mesrob Vartavarian examines Muslim interactions with colonial and postcolonial Philippine states during a protracted series of armed conflicts. Spanish, American and Christian Philippine state agents attempted to place Muslim peoples into racial frameworks that fit their respective colonial imaginaries. National officials tended to view Muslim peoples as savages in need of exogenously imposed sociopolitical systems ostensibly geared towards advancing them along civilizational scales. Such ideals foundered in practice. On encountering armed resistance, colonial imaginaries were set in motion and modified in ways that allowed Muslim elites, and occasionally subalterns, to obtain the resources necessary to entrench or advance their particular socioeconomic concerns. Rather than viewing colonial wars in the Muslim zones of the Southern Philippines as perennial processes of conquest and resistance, Vartavarian contends that different Muslim groups attempted to manoeuvre onto the right side of colonial violence. Those on the receiving end of this violence experienced acute dispossession, while Muslims who managed to direct it against rival polities and factions derived substantial benefits. The Philippine Muslim historical experience is thus best understood through disaggregation. This chapter also places Muslim war bands in a comparative global context, drawing analogies with nineteenth-century raider polities in the American Southwest, the 'martial races' of British India, Palestinian resistance to Zionist settlement and warlord politics in contemporary Afghanistan.

The common theme uniting these chapters is the concept of racial difference and how that idea – born in the crucible of pseudo-sciences and

nurtured by the praxis of racialized colonial capitalism and slavery – came to inform and guide the Southeast Asian conflicts in the nineteenth century. Kramer's assertion that the Philippine-American War was fundamentally a race war fought along racial lines holds true for the conflicts which took place across the region in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century.[20] The foregrounding of race and racial difference – as nominal discursive constructs that were instrumentalized and weaponized – has been the main concern of the contributors to this volume. What the chapters in this book do is connect the colonial wars of Southeast Asia to the wider global conflicts of the nineteenth century, and the race for empire that almost all the Western powers were engaged in at the time. They show how Southeast Asia was not simply colonized through force of arms and the use of superior military technology, but also how Southeast Asians were discursively constructed as the constitutive Other to the West, and in the course of doing so were drawn into the wider current of global political, economic and intellectual history, too. Through ideas that were formulated in the West, the East was epistemically arrested and brought into the Eurocentric order of power-knowledge, where knowing the Other meant having enormous power to frame the Other as well. At the heart of this process of knowing-and-colonizing the Other were the concepts of race and racial difference that would eventually become the lasting legacies of empire in the non-Western world.

What we offer here is not simply another account of the colonization of Southeast Asia to add to the detailed studies already accomplished by Tarling, Steinberg, Taylor, Gopinath, Taylor, Tracol-Huynh, Blanchard, Sysling, and Boshier,[21] but a different view of the colonial wars of Southeast Asia which highlights how these wars were influenced by racial theory, and how Southeast Asian identities were constructed as the process of colonial conquest unfolded. Coming at a time when ethno-nationalist populism is on the rise the world over and when Southeast Asian politics have visibly shifted to the register of identity-based populism, a reminder of the genesis of race politics and the way in which racialized identity building was intrinsic to the colonial enterprise seems both timely and important. It is our hope that by bringing together these two spheres of political praxis – racial identity formation and the violent process of empire-building – we have shown how identity politics in Southeast Asia today has a long and bloody history dating back at least to the nineteenth century and the wars of empire.

20 Kramer 2006.

21 Tarling 1969; Steinberg 1985; Taylor 1987; Gopinath 1996; Taylor 2003; Tracol-Huynh 2010; Blanchard 2017; Sysling 2016; and Boshier 2018.

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1 Towards the Great Divide

Race, Sexuality, Violence and Colonialism in the Dutch East Indies, from Daendels (1808-1811) to the Java War (1825-1830)

Peter Carey

Abstract
In the two decades from the coming of Marshal Daendels (1808-1811) to the Java War (1825-1830) Javanese society was turned on its head. New concepts of honour, status and racial superiority were introduced from a Europe transformed by the industrial and political revolutions. Military uniforms were now used to demarcate rank and status, service to the colonial state transcending nobility of birth. Through despoliation and military violence the indigenous courts of south-central Java were eviscerated while racial tensions led to an anti-Chinese pogrom which started the Java War. Two contemporary wartime diaries, both written by Belgians, illustrate the racialized world of the Netherlands East Indies and the ways in which colonial wars were conducted using native auxiliaries.

Keywords: race, war, colonialism, violence, diaries

Introduction

Java's passage into the modern age in the early nineteenth century was quite exceptionally brutal. True, all such historical transitions are fraught with difficulties. One thinks here of Britain's passage from a pre-industrial to an industrial society between 1750 and 1850. But at least in the case of Britain that transition took place over the best part of a century. In the case of Java the transition was much more abrupt. One could say that within the space of just four and a half years between the 6 January 1808 arrival of Marshal Herman Willem Daendels (1762-1818) as governor-general (1808-1811) to the 20 June 1812 British assault on the Yogyakarta *kraton* (court) following their

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August-September 1811 invasion, Javanese society was turned on its head. Caught in the vortex of the Revolutionary (1792-1799) and Napoleonic wars (1799-1815), the world's first truly global conflicts, it was as though a tsunami had ripped through the island. Gone was the era of the Dutch East India Company, when Dutchmen had been forced to accommodate themselves to local Indonesian cultures, born was the high colonial age, an era where Europeans looked down on those outside Europe as inferior beings. One recalls here the words of Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), who spoke of the 'moral righteousness' of the modern age in Europe and the racist views which held non-Europeans in contempt.[1]

Sensitive Dutch contemporaries sensed the enormity of this change. One such was the Leiden lawyer, Willem van Hogendorp (1795-1838), legal adviser to the Belgian Commissioner-General L.P.J. Du Bus de Gisignies (in office 1826-1830). Van Hogendorp was the Cassandra of the new Dutch East Indies state (1818-1942). In his personal correspondence with his father, Gijsbert Karel (1762-1834), architect of the post-1813 Dutch monarchy, he warned of the disasters to come. In particular, in 1827 he reflected that it was not so much 'the [Java] War [1825-1830] [...] or the number of our enemies', which constituted his greatest concern for the future of Dutch rule in the Indies, but what he termed:

> the spirit of the whole population of Java from one end to the other and I include here the spirit of [the inhabitants of] our most important outer island possessions in Borneo, Makassar and throughout Sumatra. [...] They are sick and tired of us [*zij zijn ons moe*]. [...] As concerns the cause [of this] it is nothing else than that [since 1816] the Dutch [colonial] government [...] has made itself most vile in the eyes of the Javanese.[2]

Another unlikely Delphic Oracle was the sixteen-year-old son of the future Dutch King, Willem II (r. 1840-1849), by his Russian consort, Anna Pavlovna (1795-1865), Prins Hendrik de Zeevaarder (Prince Henry the Seafarer) (1820-1879). On 7 March 1837, the young naval officer prince visited Diponegoro as an exile in his 'two miserable hot rooms' in Fort Rotterdam, Makassar. Appalled by the conditions in which he found the former Java War leader being held, he warned his father:

> Everyone knows that Diponegoro rebelled against us, but the manner of his arrest will always be, according to my way of seeing things, a scandal

1 Gandhi 2000: V, pt. 22, p. 158.
2 Van Hogendorp 1913: 142, 170.

> on the old Dutch word of honour [*de oude Hollandsche trouw*]. It is true he was a rebel, but he came to put an end to a war which had cost both himself and us [Hollanders] so many lives, and moreover he came to negotiate based on his implicit trust in our good faith. Then he was arrested on the orders of General De Kock. I believe that this matter, which has served us so well (relative to our possession of the whole of Java), has done us the greatest harm in moral terms because if, unfortunately, we get into another [great] war in Java either ourselves or the Javanese will go under, because not a *single* local head will ever want to have anything to do with us again. And this will happen not just in Java but everywhere [throughout the archipelago].[3]

In Java's case there was an alternative – that of the creolized Dutch-Portuguese-Indonesian elite families, who held political power at the end of the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, VOC) era – the Altings, Van Braams, Engelhards, Van Riemsdijks and Wieses. Given different historical circumstances, they might have provided a bridge between Java's 'old order' and the modern nationalist age. One thinks here of the role of a similar creolized elite and its leadership in South America with figures such as Simón Bolívar (1783-1830), founder of the Republic of Gran Colombia (1819-1831), and the Argentine-born General Don José de San Martin (1778-1850), the founder of the Republic of Peru (1822), who brought Spanish America into a new postcolonial – Republican – era. This could perhaps have enabled Javanese society to negotiate the transition to modernity in an altogether gentler and more culturally sensitive manner. But it was not to be. For sure, this creolized governing class would ultimately have been swept aside – along with the VOC (think here of the demise of the British East India Company in 1867) – by the emergence of a new Indonesian nationalist elite in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. But they would

3 Kattendijke-Frank 2004: 121, quoting Koninklijke Huis Archief (The Hague), GO54-309-01, Prins Hendrik to his father (post-1840, King Willem II, r. 1840-1849), Makassar, 7/03/1837: 'Iedereen weet dat Diepo Negoro [Diponegoro] in opstand tegen ons is geweest maar zijn gevangennemen zal altoos volgens mijne wijze van de zaak in te zien, een schandvlek aan de oude hollandsche trouw zijn. Het is waar hij was muiteling, maar hij kwam om een eind te maken aan eene oorlog die aan ons en aan hem zoon veel volk heeft gekost had en wat nog meer is hij kwam vertrouwende op de hollandsche trouw om te onderhandelen. Toen is hij gevat op order van de Generaal De Kock. Ik geloof dat deze zaak die ons het is waar zeer veel gedient heeft (betrekkelijk ons bezit van Geheel Java) ons het grootste kwaad gedaan heeft in het moreel want indien wij voor ons ongeluk weer oorlog op Java krijgen zal een der beiden ten onder gaan wij of de Javaan, want geen *een* Hoofd zal dan immer meer iets met ons te doen willen hebben. Dat zal niet alleen op Java gebeuren maar overall.' Emphasis in original.

have allowed a breathing space for the Javanese to adjust to the new era.[4] Instead, in quick succession a tide of European newcomers – first British (1811-1816) and then – post-19 August 1816 – Dutch (75 per cent of whom had never set foot in the colony) – would descend on the island, bringing with them the values and racist agenda of post-Revolutionary Europe. One of the outcomes of this cultural shock which was Java's brutal transition to the modern age was the Java War (1825-1830). This was the response of the island's indigenous political and religious (Islamic) elites to the challenge of European racism and imperialism. Diponegoro (1785-1855) would be its most famous and tragic protagonist – Java's very own Hamlet, lamenting like Shakespeare's Prince of Denmark that 'the time is out of joint, o cursèd spite, that ever I was born to set it right!'[5]

The present essay looks at this brutal transition in Java's modern history. It considers especially the multiple ways in which the new colonial order operated as it related to the issue of race, ethnicity, status and honour. The Java War (1825-1830) will be the focus here, and two contemporary wartime diaries – both written in French by Belgians – the first by the painter-architect Antoine Auguste Joseph Payen (1792-1853) and the second by the infantry officer Captain (post-May 1827, Major; post-March 1830, Lieutenant-Colonel) Comte Edouard Errembault de Dudzeele et d'Orroir (1789-1830), will be the main sources. But these wartime diaries, full of insights as they are, need to be set in a broader historical context. And here we must await the researches of the Dutch military historian of the Java War, Mark Loderichs of the Netherlands Institute for Military History (NIMH), before the fine grain of the wartime history is properly known.[6]

Although Governor-General Van der Capellen (in office 1816-1826), would later write in his private diary that news of the war had reached him 'completely unexpectedly' ('op het aller onverwachts'),[7] the five-year-long conflagration in Central Java was not a bolt from the blue. Many were its antecedents. Indeed, one needs to travel back at least a decade and a half to Daendels's reformist administration (1808-1811) to begin to grasp its deeper

4 Carey 2018: xix.

5 *Hamlet*, act 1, scene 5, lines 190-191.

6 Mark Loderichs's Leiden University PhD thesis, 'Benteng, barisan en mobiele colonne. Het Nederlandse militaire beleid tijdens de Javaoorlog, 1825-1830' (Forts, native auxiliaries and mobile columns: Dutch military policy during the Java War, 1825-1830), is due for submission in 2022. I am very much indebted to Mark Loderichs for his numerous helpful criticisms and inputs on my current text.

7 Van der Capellen 1860: 363.

roots. Even then, there were strands relating to race and identity which can only be understood through the prism of the subsequent administrations of Raffles's British interregnum and the post-1816 restored Dutch East Indies regime. This was the 'time of madness', the *zaman kalabendu*, later immortalized in the works of the famous Surakarta court-poet, Raden Ngabehi Ronggawarsita (1802-1873), which, along with the great compendium of Javanese manners, the *Serat Centhini* (1814), marked the last classical age of Javanese literature.

Daendels and the Dawn of a New Colonial Age

As the new high colonial age dawned no aspect of life was left untouched: sexual relations, dress codes, hair styles, transport, highways, language, racial stereotypes, Sino-Javanese relations, legal systems, the institution of slavery, even the way one drank one's tea, were all subject to the exigencies of the new political order. And how strange this must have all seemed to Javanese contemporaries, especially to those born, like Diponegoro, in the years in which the Javanese 'old order' seemed intact. As the eighteenth century drew to a close the once mighty Dutch East India Company (VOC) lay prostrate. Bankrupted by the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War (1780-1784) and politically obliterated by the French Revolution (1789-1799), it was declared bankrupt (1798) and its charter allowed to lapse (31 December 1799). Its assets were taken over by the newly established Batavian Republic (1795-1806). But even this latter state was a puppet. A client regime created by French generals, its masters were the Republican commanders of the Armée du Nord which had marched across the frozen Dutch rivers and canals in the bitter winter of 1794-1795 when wolves roamed the streets of Paris.

But what would the Javanese elite know about these developments? The telegraph was still a half century away and the swiftest round trip to Europe via the Cape by a fast frigate like the French-built *Medusa* – later the inspiration for the Romantic artist Théodore Guéricault's *Le radeau de la Méduse* ('The Raft of the Medusa', 1818-1819) after its shipwreck – could take half a year. But what they did do was to observe how these once confident Dutchmen with their brocaded coats, ivory-handled canes and tricorn hats behaved. They saw them pleading with their Javanese and Madurese masters for military assets with which to defend their colonial capital. In 1781, during the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, and again in 1792-1802, during the First and Second Coalition wars against Republican France, Javanese, Madurese and Sumbawanese *hulptroepen* (native levies) were key to the safety of the

embattled VOC garrison in Batavia.[8] Their presence – ably coordinated by the future governor of Java's north-east coast, Nicolaus Engelhard (1761-1831; in office 1801-1808) – succeeded in repulsing a British landing at Marunda just to the east of Batavia in October 1800. But even when help arrived in the form of foreign mercenaries, as occurred in 1792 with the dispatch of a Württemberg infantry regiment from the Cape (South Africa), the relief was temporary. No sooner had the battle-hardened Germans been sent to the Moluccas to defend the nutmeg-rich Banda Islands against a British invasion force then they deserted lock, stock and barrel.[9]

When Marshal Herman Willem Daendels arrived in Java on 6 January 1808 he found the island under siege. So rigorous was the Royal Navy's blockade of Java's north coast ports that nothing could move along the north coast without attracting the guns of Rear-Admiral Sir Edward Pellew's (1757-1833; in post 1805-1809) Indian Ocean squadron. But Daendels thought big. If a coastal highway was strategically impossible, he would use gunpowder to blast a new mountain road through the Priangan Highlands via Puncak (Megamendung), Bandung (an entirely new Daendels-founded regional capital, 21 September 1810) and Cianjur. And so Daendels's great trans-Java post road (*postweg*) was born (1809-1810): 'no governor had thought of it before him, and I believe none will dare to contemplate it afterwards' ('aucun gouverneur n'y avoit pensé avant lui et je crois qu'aucun n'auroit osé penser après') was Errembault's pithy summation of the project's sheer scale.[10]

But Daendels's governorship was not just about roads. It also laid the foundation for the administrative centralization of the Netherlands-Indies and post-1945 Indonesia, thus changing forever the relationship between the colonial government in Batavia and the Javanese. Tasked by King Louis of Holland (r. 1806-1810) with sweeping powers to reform the corrupt administration of the former Dutch East India Company (VOC) (9 February 1807) and elevated to the highest military rank as Marshal of Holland (Maarschalk

8 Leupe 1879: 337-338.

9 Potgieter and Grundlingh 2007: 46.

10 Errembault 1825-1830: 17 January 1829. In this entry the full quotation reads: 'Much has been said – and people will still be talking for a long time – about the roads which Napoleon had made in Europe, but I dare say almost none has presented so many insurmountable difficulties as the one from Buitenzorg [Bogor] to here [Bandung]: one does nothing else but go up and down, often surrounded by precipices. In some places they had to cut into the rock to a considerable depth and use mines. It needed the firm character and absolute will of Marshal Daendels to undertake a work of this nature. No governor-general before him [had] thought of it and I believe none after him will dare to contemplate it [either]. Javanese with a little education who know the history of Napoleon compare him to Marshal Daendels, calling him "The Daendels of Europe", although I think the latter [Daendels] will always win out over the former [Napoleon].'

van Holland) (28 January 1807),[11] to ensure Java's defence against the British, Daendels's 41-month tenure as colonial viceroy left a lasting legacy. He was not in the business of reforming a few archaic practices, a little tinkering at the edges to bring the old Dutch East India Company into the modern world. He wanted root-and-branch change. His administration transformed the political and social world of Java. In everything that touched the relationship between south-central Javanese courts – Yogyakarta and Surakarta – and Batavia, from the political demands of the colonial administration, to access to labour and economic resources, to new notions of status, and military and defence requirements in an era of global conflict, it was clear that Java had entered a new age. Like a depth charge, the impact of Daendels's presence would be felt long after his mid-May 1811 departure.

There was much the Marshal did not plan. His sartorial legacy – in particular, his bequest of an alternative military dress code at the indigenous courts and in the colonial bureaucracy – was a by-product of his administration. But the fact that uniforms continue to play such a role in Javanese society is a measure of his extraordinary influence. He turned Javanese society upside down, offering new ways of acquiring status, and importing from Europe what British historian Norman Hampson has called 'the nationalisation of honour'.[12] This mirrored the French Revolutionary dictum that 'it is no longer one's birth which gives honour but one's service to the state'.[13] The first governor-general with a military rank, he set a precedent which would resonate into the modern period. Here he reflected a contemporary trend in Europe: the militarization of European monarchies and the tendency for European rulers and their male offspring to wear military dress while on official duties.[14]

That Daendels's administration in Java had a pronounced military character could be seen not just in his sartorial style but in the time he devoted to military issues. Unlike former Dutch governor-generals of the VOC era (1602-1799), whose fashion was that of the Dutch regency elite, Daendels's formal attire was his marshal's uniform, and his new *generaal gouvernement* (general, that is, central, government) with its dependant hierarchy of

11 Daendels's rank only came into force when he reached Java on 6 January 1808. His elevation as Marshal of Holland (nota bene, *not* Marshal of the Empire) did not please Napoleon, who considered that the Dutch were not a martial nation and should not have such a high-ranking military officer. Indeed, he rebuked his younger brother, Louis Bonaparte, whom he had recently (5 June 1806) elevated as King of Holland (r. 1806-1810). See Loderichs 2015: 65.

12 Hampson 1973: 209.

13 Ozouf 1989: 116-157.

14 Mansel 2005.

officials recalled the centralized command structure of the Napoleonic army. Under the new regime, Dutch-ruled territories in Java were divided into nine adjacent prefectures, each sub-divided into districts under the direction of a separate *bupati* or regent. In Indonesian historian Onghokham's words,[15] the marshal 'crowned the militarization of the colonial administration by giving each official, both European and Javanese, a military rank. Perhaps he hoped this would lead to better discipline!' Thus, began a tradition both within the Dutch colonial service (*binnenlands bestuur*) and the post-Java War (1825-1830) *priyayi* (Javanese administrative elite) of officials wearing military-style 'uniforms' as a mark of their civil service status, a practice which continues to this day.

The bestowal of uniforms and ranks to members of the Javanese and Madurese aristocracy provided a new 'Europeanized' dimension to the feudal etiquette of the courts. This in turn revolutionized social relations amongst the Javanese elite. As Werner Kraus described in his recent study of the painter Raden Saleh Syarif Bustaman (1811-1880):

> One of the big questions people faced in colonial society [...] concerned what they were allowed to wear. A semi-official, yet socially sanctioned, dress code dictated what all the inhabitants of the colony were supposed to wear. The Chinese were required to present themselves in their 'national' dress, which in the case of men included wearing the pigtail. Simple Javanese men were to wear a sarong, and their wives a sarong and kebaya, while Javanese of higher status were required to appear in 'traditional' ceremonial robes on the colonial stage. Anyone entitled to wear a uniform was to do so. The Dutch uniform entailed the right to walk upright. A Dutch uniform did not bend at the knees and certainly did not creep along the floor, which is why the uniform was so popular amongst the native princes. [...] The way these men were required to deport themselves in public was no longer dictated by their rank but by their clothing.[16]

The German commander of the Dutch Indies army, Prince Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach (1792-1862; in post, 1847-1850), noted in his diary that when he visited the royal court of Sumenep in eastern Madura, that 'a group of apanaged princes cowered on the ground while those in uniform stood equal to their European masters'.[17] 'Standing equal to their European

15 Onghokham 1991: 110.
16 Kraus and Vogelsang 2012: 84.
17 Starklof 1865-1866: I, 253.

masters' was socially very desirable, especially for those with a European education or with pretensions to be treated on a par with Europeans.

But such hybridity came at a price as Raden Saleh would later discover when his 1865 request to the Dutch king, Willem III (r. 1849-1890), to wear the uniform of the defunct Batavian *schutterij* (citizen's militia) fell on deaf ears. This forced the painter to design his own fantasy uniform which European visitors thought made him look like a faded version of Admiral Nelson, a strange intermediate being, 'half European, half Javanese, neither fish nor fowl, a *lip-lap* [Eurasian]'.[18] Such hybridity came at a price, and it was precisely the reason why Javanese rulers, like Prince Mangkunegoro II (r. 1796-1835), resolutely refused all offers from the British and Dutch colonial administrations to school his sons in Kolkata or the Netherlands. He feared that they would return neither as Europeans nor as Javanese.[19]

The same spirit – albeit from a radically different angle – animated Diponegoro's insistence during the Java War that all Dutch prisoners should dress in Javanese dress, consider conversion to Islam and use High Javanese (*krama*) to their captors rather than the despised language of the colonial state, Market Malay (*Pasar Maleisch*),[20] the 'language of chickens' in the prince's words.[21] Although later upgraded to Service Malay (*Dienst Maleisch*) and used throughout the Dutch Indies colonial administration,[22] it would be the topic of bitter indignation at the end of the nineteenth century when the insistence of Dutch officials to use this demotic Malay to address highly educated Dutch-speaking Javanese – like the pioneer Indonesian feminist Raden Ajeng Kartini (1879-1904) – caused deep offence.[23]

It is clear that the language issue had already become an increasingly hot topic of conversation amongst the Javanese elite during Daendels's administration. As a non-VOC outsider, the marshal's linguistic skills were almost certainly restricted to a knowledge of pidgin Malay (*brabbel-Maleisch*). He knew no Javanese, the language of the court elite. This set him apart from many senior VOC officials, who had postings in south-central Java, many of whom were fluent in local Indonesian languages.[24]

This situation was interestingly reflected in the behaviour of Diponegoro's father, the future Sultan Hamengkubuwono III (1812-1814), then

18 Kraus and Vogelsang 2012: 86.
19 Büchler 1888: 15; Carey 2008: 364.
20 Carey 2008: 619.
21 Ibid.: 109.
22 Hoffman 1979: 65-92.
23 Kartini 1964: 61.
24 Carey 2008: 174; Fasseur 1993: 66.

Yogyakarta Crown Prince. On 1 June 1808, at a military review at the ruler's country retreat-cum-redoubt (*pesanggrahan*) of Rojowinangun just to the east of Yogyakarta, he played the host. In the absence of his father, the second sultan, who had no knowledge of Malay or inclination to humour the Dutch, the Crown Prince, sought to prove his pro-Dutch sentiments. He insisted that his tea should be served with milk like that of his Dutch guests rather than in the Javanese way with no milk and lashings of sugar, and cried out at the top of his voice that the Yogyakarta courtiers and officials should speak nothing else but Malay on that day 'because that was the language which the sultan's friends, the Dutch, used with their own people!'[25] In this fashion, the politics of the Daendels era began to be played out at the level of language and taste as pro and anti-Dutch sentiments fuelled factional alignments at the Yogyakarta court.

It would later be taken much further by Diponegoro during the Java War, when dress – the turban, open-necked *santri* (student of religion) shirt and tabard – Arabic noms de guerre, *pégon* (Javanese written in Arabic script) writing, and *paras Nabi* (The Prophet's tonsure) hair style – would distinguish the *wong Islam* from the *kafir* Dutch. These latter sported close-cropped hair (*rambut cepak*) while their 'apostate' (*kafir murtad*) native Indonesian supporters had flowing locks. According to the prince's autobiography, his decision to shave his head – which immediately became de rigueur for both his male and female supporters – was even emulated by the ragged-clad manual workers (*buruh kéré*) and roadside grass cutters, It was the result of a vow he had taken before the 28 July 1826 battle of Kasuran (Sleman) that he would emulate the *paras Nabi* if victorious over the Gent-born Lieutenant-Colonel Edouard-Marie de Bast's (1789-1827) Mobile Column on that day.[26]

Although based on shaky military foundations, the marshal's administration drew a line under the previous Company era. The existence of his new military road – the *postweg* – marked the beginning of an integrated modern Java whose main transport system ran west-east by land along the north coast rather than, as previously, north-south following the major rivers connecting the coast and the interior. Nas and Pratiwo[27] have reminded us that 'traditional Javanese life is expressed in its urban form by its orientation towards the mountain and the river'. Once the *postweg* was constructed,

25 Carey 2008: 180.
26 Ibid.: 129 n. 10; Errembault 1825-1830: 30 July 1826.
27 Nas and Pratiwo 2002: 721.

however, it replaced the rivers as the main economic artery. Cosmological notions changed drastically:

> The Chinese did not build their new temples at the riverside anymore, but on the *postweg*. They perceived the *postweg* as the new 'breath of life'. The [modern] temple in Lasem built in the twentieth century was not oriented towards the Lasem River, as was the case with the old temple, but faced the *grote postweg*. A similar change occurred with the 'palaces' [sic, *dalem* – residences] of the regents built [along the posting road] in the mid-nineteenth century.[28]

Over time the *grote postweg* became one prolonged urbanized area. Java along with the 400-kilometre arc of the Kantō plain between Osaka and Tokyo in Japan, developed into one of the most densely populated regions in the world. In Nas and Pratiwo's words, 'one could call Java the longest city in the world with the *grote postweg* as its main transport and economic artery'.[29]

While what remains today of the *postweg* is almost obliterated by Java's urban sprawl, it did not start out that way. In fact, use of the new trans-Java highway was heavily restricted at least until 1857. Only then was it opened to general traffic. Not only was it a military road, but it was also a posting road built for the fast delivery of government dispatches and European personnel. Anyone using it needed official permission.[30] Indeed, the road was not accessible to Javanese vehicles which had to use special carting roads which ran alongside the *postweg*. It was only for Dutch carriages equipped with the requisite coachmen and footmen. In Kraus's words, 'when a colonial officer travelled along this road in an official capacity, it was more than just a journey it was a demonstration of colonial power'.[31] Such impressions were also evidenced in Captain Errembault's Java War diary[32] and by non-Dutch witnesses writing in the mid-nineteenth century.

28 Ibid.: 722.

29 Ibid.: 721.

30 Kraus and Vogelsang 2012: 98.

31 Ibid.: 69.

32 See Errembault 1825-1830: 20 January 1829, on the expense of travelling along the *postweg*, which was unaffordable for most Europeans unless one had special access to free relays of horses from the colonial government: 'les frais de poste sont si forts que très peu de personnes voyagent de cette manière, à moins d'obtenir du gouvernement les chevaux gratis, chose assez difficile' ('The cost of using the post road is so high that very few people travel in this way, unless they get free horses from the government, a rather difficult thing').

Amongst the latter was the Stuttgart-born travel writer Therese von Bacheracht, later Therese von Lützow (1804-1852), who had married her cousin, then commander of the eastern military division of Java, Colonel (post-1852, Major-General) Heinrich von Lützow (1807-1879; in post, 1849-1852). Just before her death from dysentery in remote Cilacap on her way back to Germany, she wrote that 'when a military or civilian person of high rank travels, this is done with such expense that it appears to say to the natives: "We are the masters and you are the servants!"'[33]

Another German visitor, Dr Gustav Spieß (1802-1875), who participated in the first official Prussian expedition to East Asia in 1860-62, remarked that:

> the shyness [of the Javanese] in the face of Europeans is indescribable: every rider climbed down from his horse when our carriage approached, the worker set down his load and all natives who encountered us cowered in a humble position on the ground until the white men, the *tuwan-tuwan* (colonial masters), had driven past.[34]

'Driving past' thus came to symbolize a core element of the new relationship between the Dutch and the Javanese created by Daendels's *postweg*. Indeed, the road was a paradox: at one level it had shrunk physical distance, and at another level it had introduced a new 'tyranny of separation' between governors and governed. In Kraus and Vogelsang's words:

> A carriage flying along the sealed and illuminated post road, surrounded and protected by riders in decorative uniforms and the Javanese cowering on the ground: this is the image that best reflects the society which organized the most successful system of colonial exploitation ever [but] which nonetheless lived in settlements, called defiantly and in slight fear 'Buitenzorg' [beyond care] and 'Weltevreden' [well satisfied].[35]

An extreme view of this new relationship is evidenced in P.A. Daum's (1850-1898) novel *Indische menschen in Holland* (Indies hands in Holland) (1890):

> I lived in two cities of royal residence [Surakarta and Yogyakarta]. Personally, I came into very little contact with the population, and also had no desire to examine the circumstances of their lives. I have not the least

33 Therese von Lützow, 'Java Diary', 1852, quoted in Kraus and Vogelsang 2012: 69.
34 Spieß 1864: 400.
35 Kraus and Vogelsang 2012: 69.

> sympathy for the population. They are not a people. They are nothing, simply nothing. They are a collection of individuals who have a concept of family that is more reminiscent of a colony of apes or a rabbit warren.[36]

The widening social divide between the colonial masters and non-elite *inlander* (indigenous Indonesians) would fuel the xenophobia of the Java War. But even at the elite level, so brutal and sudden were the changes that they would make it well-nigh impossible for those who had grown to manhood in the still intact Javanese 'old order' to make the required shift in consciousness. Amongst the south-central Javanese aristocracy few indeed would begin to make the necessary adjustments to the new colonial order before the Java War. But by then it would be too late. The time for making changes the Javanese way would have long since passed. The colonial government would do it for them. Turning the clock back in Java to a pre-Daendels era, as Diponegoro attempted during the Java War, was an exercise in nostalgia. After the Marshal they could be no turning back: Java had crossed the Rubicon into the modern age.

Raffles and the British Interregnum: Sowing the Wind (1811-1816)

Java's passage beyond the Rubicon accelerated during the British 'interregnum' (1811-1816) when the island was briefly occupied by a British-Indian administration supported by sepoy bayonets and British naval guns. This brought to Java's shores a new and far better resourced enemy than the threadbare Franco-Dutch administrations of Marshal Daendels and his luckless successor, Lieutenant-General Jan Willem Janssens (1762-1838; in office 16 May-18 September 1811). The Javanese elite would now experience the full force of Britain at its imperial zenith, what historian Chris Bayly has termed the island nation's 'imperial meridian'. This spanned the half century between the start of the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War in 1780 and the end of the Java War in 1830.[37] They would also find that they had exchanged one form of colonial tyranny for another, no longer a Napoleonic marshal this time but a 'virtual Napoleonic philosopher' and instinctive authoritarian, Thomas Stamford Raffles (1781-1826), a man 'who had a strong distrust of the [native] chiefs and a desire to rule autocratically'.[38]

36 Quoted in ibid.

37 Bayly 1989.

38 Bastin 1957: xx, quoting C.Th. Elout (1767-1841, Minister of the Marine and Colonies, 1824-1829).

Amongst Raffles's principal ambitions was to set his mark on Java. This he did with unparalleled violence.[39] But he also left a legacy for the future which would play itself out – less than a decade after his 30 March 1816 departure – in the bitterly fought Java War (1825-1830). The storming of the Yogyakarta court (*kraton*) on 20 June 1812 was the turning point. It set the seal on what Daendels had begun and marked a decisive shift in the balance of political power between the colonial government in Batavia (post-1942, Jakarta) and the south-central Javanese courts. Never again would a governor-general have to fear the countervailing military power of the independent Javanese rulers. The treaties imposed by Raffles on 1 August 1812 in the aftermath of the British military operations in south-central Java would strip them forever of their independent military capacity. This shift was reflected in Raffles's 25 June 1812 dispatch to his patron, Lord Minto (1751-1814; governor-general of Bengal, 1807-1813), following the fall of Yogyakarta, when he boasted that 'the European power is for the first time paramount in Java. [...] We never till this moment could call ourselves masters of the more valuable provinces in the interior, nay, our possessions on the sea coasts would always have been precarious.'[40]

One physical manifestation of this changed political reality was the elevation of the Yogyakarta Kapitan Cina (head of the Chinese community), Tan Jin Sing (c. 1770-1831; in office 1802-1813) – referred to as 'corpse' (*jisim*) in the Javanese *babad*[41] – as a Javanese court *bupati* (senior administrative official). Now entitled Raden Tumenggung Secodiningrat on 6 December 1813, Tan Jin Sing's appointment would have significant repercussions in terms of race relations between the Javanese and the Chinese communities in south-central Java. One of whose outcomes would be the anti-Chinese massacre and powerful xenophobic sentiments which gripped south-central Java in the run-up to the Java War.

As with the painter Raden Saleh, Tan Jin Sing occupied a strange position suspended uneasily between three worlds. This was later summed up in the clever Yogyakarta ditty 'no longer a Chinese, not yet a Dutchman, a half-baked Javanese' ('Cina wurung, Londo durung, Jawa tanggung') (Meinsma 1876: 132). Nearly all foreign-educated Javanese at this time experienced this condition. These included the ill-fated sons of the anglophile *bupati* of Semarang, Suroadimenggolo V (c. 1775-1826; in office 1809-1822), Raden Mas Saleh (b. Terboyo [Semarang], c. 1800-died Semarang 1872; post-1816,

39 Carey 2021a.
40 Carey 2008: 342-343.
41 Carey 1992: 243; 2008: 337 n. 274.

Raden Adipati Ario Notodiningrat, *bupati* of Probolinggo in the Eastern Salient [Oosthoek] of Java [1817-c. 1821] and Lasem [c. 1821-1824]) and Raden Mas Sukur Yudoatmodikoro (post-1825, Raden Hasan Mahmud) (b. Terboyo [Semarang], c. 1802-died Ternate pre-March 1856). They had been sent to Kolkata for three years (1812-1815) for their high school education by Raffles in July 1812, and ended up 'neither fish nor fowl', *liplaps* in the derogatory term for Eurasians. As anglophone Javanese, they would later fall under political suspicion following the Dutch return in August 1816 as being altogether too pro-British, and would end their days either in political obscurity in their native Semarang (Suroadimenggolo V, 15 November 1826; Raden Mas Saleh [Notodiningrat], 16 February 1872)[42] or in exile outside Java (Sukur in Ternate, 1831-pre-March 1856),[43] or even – in the case of the first – find that their mortal remains could only find an honoured final resting place outside their native Java (Suroadimenggolo V, Sumenep, 20 July 1827).[44]

Returning to the paradoxes of Tan Jin Sing's life, it is clear that the example of the former Kapitan Cina was later referenced by the future Java War leader, Prince Diponegoro (1785-1855), who later fanned anti-Chinese sentiments during the Java War by forbidding his commanders to have intimate relations with Chinese women.[45] He subsequently (May 1830) described Tan Jin Sing as having been favoured by the British 'only with the intention of keeping a better eye on the activities of the Yogyakarta court [and] this had done much harm to the trust which [the court] placed in the Government'.[46] The elevation of the former Kapitan Cina thus fuelled growing anti-Chinese sentiments amongst the local population in the sultan's capital, sentiments already manifest at the time of the British assault in the burning of several Chinese-run tollgates (*bandar*) at Prambanan.[47]

The 1 August 1812 treaties legalized the political revolution wrought by the shock and awe of the British attack. Article 2, which required the rulers to disband their military forces, was critical. Aimed particularly at Yogyakarta, where the second sultan had maintained a considerable

42 See the death notices in the *Bataviasche Courant*, no. 49, 6 December 1826, and *Opregte Haarlemsche Courant*, no. 41, 5 April 1827 (Suroadimenggolo V); and *De Locomotief*, no. 40, 16 February 1872, and *Semarangsche Courant*, 17 February 1872 (Raden Mas Saleh [Notodiningrat]).

43 Hageman 1856: 412; Carey 2008: 364; Carey 2018: xxii-xxiii.

44 *Bataviasche Courant*, no. 72, 18 August 1827, referencing Suroadimenggolo V's suppressed 'obituary' by the Resident of Madura and Sumenep, François Emanuel Hardy (1781-1828, in office 1824-1827), and Carey 2018: xxii n. 3, referencing his burial inscription and mausoleum at Asta Tinggi royal graveyard, Sumenep.

45 Carey 1984: 1-3; Carey 2008: 617-621.

46 Carey 2008: 400.

47 Carey 1984: 22-23.

(8,000-9,000) standing army,[48] these troops were now dismissed. Raffles tried to send some of them to eastern Kalimantan (Borneo) to work on the estates of his megalomaniac friend, Alexander Hare (1775-1834),[49] a would-be Raja Brooke who had created a 'Heart of Darkness' domain more akin to King Leopold II's (r. 1865-1909) Congo Free State than the 'just and beneficent government' envisaged by Lord Minto in his post-Meester Cornelis battle declaration (26 August 1811).[50]

The introduction of Raffles's land tax scheme in the former princely territories newly annexed under the terms of the 1 August 1812 treaty resulted in great hardship. Not only were British fiscal demands too onerous, but the cultivators had to pay in cash – preferably silver – rather than kind. This forced many into the hands of Chinese moneylenders who charged extortionate interest. The resultant ethnic tensions caused widespread discontent and fuelled the massive peasant uprising and anti-Chinese pogrom of July-September 1825, curtain-raiser to the Java War.[51]

The cession of tollgates and markets, for which the British paid an annual 'rent' of 100,000 Spanish dollars or US$2,000,000 in present-day money, was provided in Article 4. Both the British and the post-1816 returned Dutch government would raise tollgate revenues out of all proportion to economic realities. This paralyzed local commerce and contributed to the pogrom which made the Chinese tollgate keepers (*bandar*) a target of such bloody reprisals in the opening months of the Java War.[52]

One further clause in the treaties bore even harder on the local population. This was Article 8, which stipulated that all foreigners and Javanese born outside the principalities should be tried according to government law. Designed to protect the Chinese, it caused numerous problems. After February 1814, when Raffles established the Resident's courts, all litigation involving Chinese, foreigners and subjects born outside the territories of the south-central Javanese *kraton*, was tried under 'Government law'. This was a blend of Roman law and Dutch civil law along with the statutes passed in the States-General in Holland having application to the colonies and all but incomprehensible to native defendants.[53] Henceforth, Javanese engaging in litigation with non-Javanese or those Javanese born in government territories

48 Carey 2008: 5-7, 379.
49 Hannigan 2012: 294-298.
50 Carey 2008: 285.
51 Carey 1984: 36-42; *Babad Dipanagara* 2020: 265-266 n. 106.
52 Carey 1984: 36-42; Carey 2008: 384-385.
53 *Babad Dipanagara* 2020: 235-236 n. 12.

had their cases tried in these courts, which led to much discontent amongst the populations of south-central Java.

While the Javanese rulers resented the restrictions on their judicial authority and Javanese farmers struggled with a foreign judicial system, the religious communities were also alienated. They deplored the fact that the religious court or *surambi* no longer had sole judgement in criminal cases.[54] Diponegoro, who prided himself on his knowledge of Javanese-Islamic law, later complained bitterly that '[t]he [European] authority in Java was a great misfortune for the Javanese people for they had been taken away from the Holy Law of The Prophet and been subjected to European laws.'[55] He would later refer to this again during the first stage of his journey into exile, when he told his Dutch officer escorts, Major François de Stuers (1792-1881) and Captain Johan Jacob Roeps (1805-1840), that 'people know that I long to have authority over criminal law'. 'By which he meant', the officers explained, 'that he wanted to have the right to appoint one "priest" [*penghulu*] in Djocjo [Yogya] and [one in] Solo, who could enforce the criminal law according to the Koran [*Qur'ān*] and not according to our [European] laws'.[56]

Raffles's 1812 treaties, his elevation of controversial allies like Tan Jing Sing/Secodiningrat, his subsequent legal reforms and the question of the sovereignty of Javanese-Islamic law in criminal cases would all prove crucial during the Java War (1825-1830). At this time Diponegoro's wartime demands to be recognized as the 'regulator of religion' ('ratu paneteg panatagama') with special competence over issues of criminal justice had widespread popular resonance.[57] In Yogyakarta, the combination of the fall of the *kraton*, the wholesale plunder of its treasury and the imposition of Raffles's 1 August 1812 treaty dealt the sultanate a shattering blow. In the opening months (late July-September 1825) of the Java War, Diponegoro would attempt the final destruction of the Yogyakarta *kraton* by establishing a new undefiled *kraton* at another site.[58] Once again Leiden lawyer Willem van Hogendorp would find the right words: 'All Java knows this: how the Dutch allowed the *kraton* [of Yogyakarta] to be turned into a brothel and how Diponegoro has sworn to destroy it to the last stone and expel the [European] landowners who have driven out the Javanese officials.'[59]

54 Carey 1987: 298-299 n. 67.
55 Knoerle 1830: 30.
56 Louw and De Klerck 1894-1909: V, 744; Carey 1987: 300 n. 72.
57 Carey 2008: 388.
58 *Babad Dipanagara* 2020: 242 n. 29; 294 n. 197.
59 Carey 2008: 389.

Racism, Islamophobia and Sexual Exploitation: How the Returned Dutch Administration lit the South-Central Javanese Powder Keg (1816-1825)

On 19 August 1816 in a public ceremony in Batavia the Union flag was lowered and the Dutch tricolour run up. The Dutch were back. But these were not the periwigged and brocade-coated officials of the former Dutch East India Company (VOC), but the citizen bureaucrats of post-Revolutionary Europe. They were almost to a man (there were no women in the colonial administration) wholly ignorant and contemptuous of the Indies world which now awaited them. Within less than a decade Java would be plunged into war and the new Netherlands-Indies state (1818-1942) tested almost to destruction.

Raffles already had a sense of what was in store, confiding to his friend William Marsden (1754-1836), the former First Secretary to the Admiralty and author of the famed *History of Sumatra* (1784), after a dinner with the new Dutch monarch, Willem I (r. 1813-40), in Brussels on 27 July 1817:

> The King himself and his leading minister [Secretary of State Anton Reinhard Falck, in office 1813-1818] seem to mean well [and are] very communicative about their eastern colonies [...] [but] they have too great a hankering after profit, and *immediate* profit, for any liberal policy to thrive under them. They seem to be miserably poor.[60]

The return of the former Dutch East Indies to the impoverished Netherlands, bled white by the French occupation (1810-1813), opened the flood gates to a seemingly unstoppable tide of former Napoleonic War soldiers like Captain Errembault de Dudzeele[61] and fortune seekers of all sorts. These

60 Raffles 1830: 289, emphasis in original.

61 Errembault 1825-1830: 21 August 1826: 'Non, je ne suis pas venu à l'Inde pour y donner des parties [...] mais bien pour faire mon possible pour ramasser un peu d'argent [...] et retourner après en Europe pas tout à fait aussi pauvre que j'en suis sorti' ('No, I did not come to the Indies [Java] to give parties [...] but to do my best to acquire a little money [...] and then return to Europe not quite as poor as when I left it'). In contrast to the army in the Netherlands, the colonial army was by law an all-volunteer army, the 1815 Dutch constitution forbidding the sending of militia (conscripts) to the colonies. This was only changed after 1945, when the Dutch needed troops so badly for their war against the infant Indonesian Republic, proclaimed on 17 August 1945, that they changed the constitution to allow conscripts to serve. Captain Errembault was thus part of an all-volunteer Dutch Indies colonial army which was in existence almost to the end of the Dutch colonial era (1816-1842; 1945-1949). I am grateful to Mark Loderichs for this information, electronic communication, 13 September 2019.

men, 'whose former vocations no one had the slightest inkling of',[62] now descended on Java to make a career for themselves. Well over half of those who made their way to the newly returned colony at this time claimed to have special recommendations from the new governor-general, Van der Capellen (in office 1816-1826).[63]

As a keen-eyed traveller, who visited Java shortly after the handover, wrote, the newly arrived Dutch viceroy was literally overwhelmed with boat loads of

> aged paterfamilias who, instead of knowledge of Indies affairs, only brought over with them a numerous and needy progeny, and who had no other intention [...] than to restore in the shortest possible time [...] their dilapidated affairs in the mother country so that, without having to trouble themselves further with the Indies, they could return home with their nests nicely feathered.[64]

Baroe datang (one who has just arrived) would soon become a veritable refrain amongst the great Portuguese-Indies-Dutch mixed-race families in Batavia as they contemplated this unwelcome tide of newcomers whose arrival heralded the transformation of Dutch colonial society into a tropical *beambtenstaat* (bureaucratic state).[65]

One of the foremost representatives of this post-Napoleonic War generation of Dutch officials was the new Resident of Yogyakarta, Major Nahuys van Burgst (1782-1858; in office 1816-1822). A 'bigwig with a pair of thick epaulettes' ('Tuan Besar met een paar dikke epauletten'),[66] Nahuys was everything that his dour and scholarly Scots predecessor, John Crawfurd, was not. A man 'who enjoyed eating and drinking and the spreading of Dutch ways' ('karemannya mangan minum/lan anjrah cara Welandi'),[67] he had a scarcely concealed contempt for Javanese society and culture. In particular, he despised the Javanese Islamic world of wandering *santri* (students of religion) in which the prince had grown up. Diponegoro's reaction to this unwelcome change can be seen in the diary notes of the prince's Prussian officer escort, Second Lieutenant Julius Heinrich Knoerle (1795-1833), made during the prince's exile voyage to Manado in May-June 1830. Invited to compare the styles of the British and Dutch Residents, Diponegoro observed that:

62 Van den Doel 1994: 49.
63 Van den Broek 1893: 3.
64 Van den Doel 1994: 49, citing Olivier 1830: III, 425.
65 Taylor 1983: 116; Bosma and Raben 2008: 185-186.
66 De Stuers 1833: 19.
67 *Babad Dipanegara* 2010: II, 106, canto XVIII, verse 131.

> He had never known any Dutch [official] endowed with the same love of his fellow man and with the same noble-hearted character as Crawfurd. […] [He] spoke about everything with his father or with himself, and he had made the Javanese language his own in under six months because the Malay language is the language of chickens which no ruler in Java wishes to hear.[68]

But Nahuys's presence not only marked a change from his British predecessor in terms of personal style, it also signalled a change in terms of policy and behaviour first with regard to his dealings with the religious communities (*santri*, *ulama*) and second in terms of the sexual mores of the returned Dutch administrators.

As regards the religious communities, Nahuys was soon boasting to his superiors in Batavia about his 'strong-arm' tactics: he ordered an *ulama* to be seized while giving a lesson in his religious school (*pesantren*). He also reported that similar actions had been taken against 'recalcitrant' religious teachers in Salatiga by the local Assistant Resident with 'excellent results'.[69] Contemporary reports from his period in Yogya are replete with the phrase 'sly priest', an interesting reflection on the way in which the new Dutch Resident's attitudes and those of his post-1816 Dutch contemporaries were shaped by a Calvinist-inspired hatred of Roman Catholicism.[70] These attitudes hardened still further following the outbreak of the Java War on 20 July 1825. At this time, the term '*santri*' – pious Muslims and students of religion – became a term of abuse.[71] Those suspected of harbouring *santri* – short-hand for pro-Diponegoro – sympathies were singled out for special treatment as Payen (1792-1853), noticed during the siege of Yogyakarta in August-September 1825:

> This morning [18 August 1825] various vagabonds suspected of being bandits [*brandhal*, namely followers of Diponegoro] were brought in. They were put in chains. The white soldiers were allowed to have their fun: I saw an officer hit one of these men, said to be a *santri*, as hard as possible. Another, who remained in the hands of the soldiers, was mistreated in a most cruel fashion. Trampled underfoot, he was taken away dying, blood pouring from his mouth. What I have written, I have seen.[72]

68 Carey 2008: 109.
69 Ibid.: 448.
70 Ibid.
71 Payen 1988: 120 n. 260.
72 Ibid.: 65.

The treatment of the religious communities convinced Diponegoro that the new breed of post-1816 Dutch officials and European estate leasers were completely lacking in religious feelings. As Knoerle would later note:

> [The prince] was especially incensed that Europeans in the Principalities were without any religious feelings and always ridiculed the religion [of The Prophet]. He said that drunken soldiers had defiled the temple of Muhammad in Klaten. He was so fired up with rage that I could not follow the swiftness of his words.[73]

The sexual mores of senior Dutch officials also became a source of friction. Nowhere more so than in Yogyakarta where Diponegoro and his *kraton* contemporaries were shocked by the behaviour of the new Resident, who, after fathering an illegitimate child while a law student in the Netherlands,[74] continued his open philandering during his six-year term in office in the sultan's capital. Although the prince later admitted to a certain attachment for Nahuys, he immediately qualified this by pointing out his puzzlement at the curious ménage à trois in which the Resident and his deputy, Assistant Resident. Robbert Christiaan Nicolaas d'Abo (1786-1824), appeared to be sharing the same woman in common. He was alluding here to Nahuys's very public affair with D'Abo's wife, Anna Louisa née Van den Berg (1792-1825), whom he would later marry (12 September 1824) when she was six months pregnant with his child in Yogyakarta.[75] The prince may also have been aware of the Resident's penchant for liaisons with professional women,[76] although the philandering Major never quite reached the level of his Surakarta opposite number, Diederik Willem Pinket van Haak (1779-1840; in office 1816-1817), who went through a whole series of relationships with Eurasian mistresses,[77] and left behind a bankrupt estate and ten children by different mothers by the time of his death in Surabaya in 1840.[78]

Eurasian mistresses and dalliances with the wives of junior officials were one thing, seducing and appropriating the womenfolk of well-born Javanese men was quite another. Yet this appears to have been increasingly the norm amongst Dutch officials in Central Java in the years leading up to

73 Carey 2008: 449, quoting Knoerle 1830: 14.

74 This was his daughter, Cécile Hubertine Nahuys, born Harderwijk, 13 July 1805, died Surabaya, 12 March 1868. See Christiaans 1992-1993: 157.

75 Carey 2008: 120 n. 79.

76 Houben 1994: 108.

77 Naber 1938: 45.

78 De Haan 1935: 558-559.

the Java War. In Van Hogendorp's words, 'the hatred and contempt' which the Javanese felt for Europeans in these years 'were certainly quickened by what both senior and junior officials permitted themselves with regard to native women: a number of Residents known [to me] by name forced the [Javanese] chiefs under their authority to surrender their legal wives [and daughters] to them'.[79]

According to the post-war Resident of Yogya, Frans Gerardus Valck (in office 1831-1841), the decline in morals amongst the women of the sultan's court dated back to the British conquest of June 1812, although it is hard to imagine the dour John Crawfurd taking personal advantage of this situation. After the August 1816 Dutch restoration, however, a moral rot seems to have set in. The influence of the fourth sultan's mother, Ratu Ibu (c. 1785-1826), and her lover, the commander of the sultan's bodyguard, Major Tumenggung Wironegoro (in post, 1817-1829), who acted as a 'procurer' of court women for European officials, set the tone here.[80] A nadir appears to have been reached under the pre-Java War Resident, Anthonië Hendrik Smissaert (1777-1832; in office 1823-1825). In these two years leading up to the outbreak of the war, both the Assistant Resident, Pierre Frederic Henri Chevallier (1795-1825; in office 1823-1825), and the official Residency translator, the physically unappealing Johannes Godlieb Dietrée (1782-1826; in office 1796-1825),[81] behaved in such a sexually predatory fashion that even Diponegoro himself was affected. Indeed, it would later be cited by one of the prince's relatives, the chief *penghulu* (senior religious official) of Rembang, as amongst the four key issues which the Dutch needed to address before the Java War could be brought to an end.[82]

The overweening arrogance and contempt for the *inlander* (native) which marked Dutch official contacts with the Javanese in this pre-Java War era found their fullest expression in the behaviour of the Assistant Resident. A typical product of the brash new Europe of the post-Revolutionary era, and with little understanding of Indies society – like so many who made their way to Java in the post-1816 period[83] – this unscrupulous and amoral man could perhaps be seen as a classic illustration of Ann Stoler's thesis regarding the relationship between colonial authority and sexual control.[84] Although in this case unbridled lust rather than control seems to have been

79 Van Hogendorp 1913: 40.
80 Carey 2008: 440.
81 Carey 2021b: part 2 n. 59; Payen 1988: 137 n. 238.
82 Louw and De Klerck 1894-1909: III, 494.
83 Carey 2008: 433.
84 Stoler 2002: 78; Carey 2008: 440.

the essence of Chevalier's dealings with the court princesses (*radèn ayu*). His superior, Smissaert, would later report that Chevallier had constantly engaged in love affairs with court princesses and the wives of Javanese nobles, stating that 'in general his conduct with numerous Javanese women and girls was not only extremely improper but sometimes even attended by insults'. Interestingly, Smissaert himself admitted to the Dutch monarch that although he himself had strictly eschewed love affairs with court women 'long experience in Java having taught him the risk that this entailed':

> It would be hypocritical to pretend that in a land where it was generally known that there was more laxity over the rules of decency towards women than in the Netherlands, and where the [local] women themselves were not of the highest virtue, he [Smissaert] had excelled over his predecessors and contemporaries in his [sexual] conduct.[85]

According to Diponegoro's great-uncle, Chevallier had mistreated one of the Java War leader's sisters whom he had found bathing in a river and had lived for several months with one of the prince's unofficial wives (*selir*). When this unofficial wife tried to return to the prince's home at Tegalrejo, he had refused her entry because she had slept with a European. Chevallier himself is then said to have pitched up at Diponegoro's residence to ask why she had not been admitted. To which the prince replied – understandably – that he did not maintain his *selir* for the pleasure of the Assistant Resident. Whereupon Chevallier had become angry, stating that 'he would do what he liked with native women' and had hit the prince over the head.[86] This report seems so outrageous that it would be hard to credit, especially as it was retailed to the Dutch monarch by Smissaert, but for separate pieces of evidence that the prince's treatment by Chevallier and the Residency interpreter was quite unbelievably awful. A key witness here was Kiai Gajali, a senior *ulama* in the entourage of Diponegoro's principle religious adviser, Kiai Mojo (c. 1792-1849), who was later interviewed by local Dutch authorities while in prison in Batavia.[87]

In the utterly altered epoch in which elite Javanese were living after the British gutting of the Yogyakarta *kraton* in June 1812, such sexual exploitation of their womenfolk by powerful Europeans may have seemed yet another humiliating aspect of their colonial status. But they might have reflected

85 Carey 2008: 550.
86 Ibid.: 551.
87 Ibid.

on the changes which had occurred since the eighteenth century when relationships between well-born Javanese and senior European officials had been altogether more equal. One thinks here of the passage in the 'Chronicle of the Fall of Yogyakarta' (1812-1816) in which the text's princely author relates how his mother, a woman from the eastern salient (*Oosthoek*) of Java, came to Sultan Mangkubumi's court as one of the ruler's wives. She had apparently been given to the first sultan by the Javanese-speaking governor of Java's Northeast Coast, Nicolaas Hartingh (1718-1766; in office 1754-1761), in return for Mangkubumi's personal gift of his own favourite unofficial wife, Raden Ayu Sepuh, whom the Yogyakarta monarch had presented in recognition of the governor's skill in brokering the Giyanti peace treaty on 13 February 1755.[88] This had paved the way for the foundation of Mangkubumi's Yogyakarta kingdom, hence the first sultan's gratitude. Whatever one may think of the use of women as pawns in an elaborate system of exchange between powerful eighteenth-century men, at least in this case a degree of respect appears to have existed between Mangkubumi and the Semarang governor. In the years preceding the Java War there were no such feelings. The relationship between Europeans and Javanese was now one of exploitation: the raiding of *kraton* treasuries and archives now had its counterpart in the raiding of the bodies of the court princesses.[89]

While the personal conduct of pre-War Dutch officials may have exacerbated an increasingly fraught political situation, neither Islamophobia nor sexual exploitation lay at the heart of the powder keg which was south-central Java on the eve of the Java War. That explosive charge had been laid entirely by the poverty of the Dutch colonial government. This situation, which had so struck Raffles during his 27 July 1817 dinner with the Dutch king, had forced them in 1824 to take out a six million Sicca Rupee loan (US$100 million in present-day money) from the great private banking house of John Palmer & Co. in Kolkata. The collateral demanded was rumoured to be the whole of Java, although in fact only one province of Java – Kedu – sufficed.[90] And this just to keep the wheels of the colonial administration turning! Given the problems attendant on Raffles's poorly administered land tax, the principal fiscal resource for the Netherlands Indies state in the years leading up to the Java War were the tollgates (*bandar*), in particular, the revenue farms leased on an annual basis to Chinese tax farmers.[91] Between August 1816

88 Carey 1992: 5-6; Remmelink 1994: 273.
89 Carey 2008: 439-440.
90 Tarling 1963: 161-188; Bosma 2007: 278.
91 Carey 2008: 471-478.

and October 1824, revenues from this source tripled. But the social cost was huge, as Payen noted in his diary: 'Yes, indeed, these farms have increased [in value], but how? [...] By the most disgusting extortions of these Chinese brigands who have found a way of paying for this "proof of prosperity".'[92] Sino-Javanese ethnic relations soon reached a tipping point. 'We hope they [the Javanese] will not be awoken out of their slumbering state', wrote the Acting Resident of Surakarta, Hendrik Mauritz MacGillivray (1797-1835, in office 1823-1825) on 24 October 1824, 'for we reckon it as a certainty that if the tollgates are allowed to continue, the time is not far distant when the Javanese will be aroused in a terrible fashion'.[93]

By the time Payen arrived in Yogyakarta on 1 July 1825 to oversee the second stage of the rebuilding of the Residency House, that terrible awakening was just weeks away. By then the south-central Javanese countryside had become a place of suspicion and terror. Armed gangs operated with virtual impunity, murders were rife and the daily activities of the local peasant cultivators took place under the ever-watchful eyes of the tollgate keepers' spies, who were positioned on every village and country road to prevent the evasion of toll dues. Even the dead on their way to burial were liable for imposts, and mere passage through a tollgate even without dutiable goods would expose the traveller to what the Javanese sarcastically came to refer to as the 'bottom [backside] tax' (*pajak bokong*). Javanese officials spoke with scarcely concealed contempt of the obscene way in which their wives and daughters were physically searched for items of jewellery by Chinese tollgate keepers newly arrived from the maritime provinces of China who were barely conversant in Malay.[94] And the plight of ordinary Javanese was even worse – some were even torn apart by the tollgate keepers' dogs.[95]

Scarcely ten days before the outbreak of the Java War, Payen travelled through Kalasan to the east of Yogyakarta to view the Yogya prime minister, Danurejo IV's (c. 1780-1849, in office 1813-1847), building work on the new bridges and was immediately struck by a posse of some hundred men armed with guns and pikes led by four or five Chinese who were about to attack a neighbouring village whose inhabitants had avoided going through the tollgates by taking alternative routes to the local markets: 'It would take another pen than mine', Payen wrote in his diary, 'to describe the thievery,

92 Payen 1988: 47, entry for 8 July 1825: 'Oui ces fermes sont augmentées, mais comment? [...] par les plus horrible vexations des brigands chinois [qui] sont parvenus à payer cette preuve de prospérité.'

93 Carey 2008: 475.

94 Ibid.: 475-476.

95 Payen 1988: 47, entry for 8 July 1825.

the cheatings of all kinds that I heard about. Nobody has been punished: they [the perpetrators] quietly enjoy the fruits of their plunder.'[96] A month later, on 10 August 1825, with the anti-Chinese pogrom, curtain-raiser to the Java War, in full swing, a shocked Payen would note that 'everywhere the Chinese are massacred: neither women nor children are spared. Never have affairs been so critical' ('partout les Chinois sont massacrés; on n'épargne ni femmes ni enfants. Jamais peut-être l'état des choses n'a été plus critique').[97]

One Man's War: The Java Journal of Count Édouard Errembault de Dudzeele (1789-1830)

Count Édouard Errembault de Dudzeele et d'Orroir, to give him his full title, was born of an ancient family of Belgian nobility in Tournai near the border between France and Walloon Flanders on 20 September 1789.[98] Sent to the Prytanée Militaire de Saint-Cyr, a military high school (*lycée militaire*) in the Yvelines *département* to the west of Paris, Errembault – at his mother's urging – decided on a military career at the age of sixteen (1806). He saw service as an infantry NCO in the Napoleonic army in Spain and Portugal during the Peninsular War (1807-1814) and rose to the rank of second lieutenant (*garçon sous-lieutenant*) on 24 December 1811.[99] He then followed his idol, the Emperor Napoleon, into Russia on his ill-fated Russian campaign (24 June-12 December 1812). A man who preferred his own company to the sociability of the officers' mess, Errembault kept a detailed diary of his wartime experiences in French service (1806-1813), which was lost at the Battle of Leipzig (16-19 October 1813),[100] most probably in the chaotic retreat following that French defeat.[101]

96 Ibid.: 9 July 1825: 'Comme nous approchions de Kalassan [Kalasan], nous vîmes venir à nous une centaine d'hommes armés de piques et de fusils à la tête desquels se trouvait quatre ou cinq Chinois. Ces messieurs allaient attaquer un village voisin dont quelques inhabitants avaient évité de passer par les chemins où sont placés les péages. […] Il faudrait une autre plume que la mienne put décrire les vols, les friponneries de tout genre que j'ai entendu citer. Personne n'a été puni; ils jouissent tranquillement du fruit de leurs rapines.'

97 Ibid.: 62.

98 Chambert-Loir 2000: 273. Errembault's date of birth is taken from NL-HaNA Koloniën, Stamboeken Militairen KNIL Oost- en West-Indië 2.10.50 inv. nr. 3: 560 (henceforth: '*Stamboek* Errembault'). My thanks to Mark Loderichs of the NIMH for providing me with a copy of Errembault's military service record (*Stamboek*).

99 Errembault 1825-1830: 24 December 1825.

100 Chambert-Loir 2000: 276, citing Errembault 1825-1830: 29 August 1826.

101 Errembault 1825-1830: 12 April 1829.

Following Napoleon's first abdication on 31 March 1814, Errembault went over into Dutch service as an infantry captain (14 July 1814)[102] and fought on the Allied side against his former Emperor at the Battle of Waterloo (18 June 1815). Later joining the ranks of the numerous *demi-soldes* (half-pay officers), nearly all former Napoleonic War veterans, he eked out an impecunious existence in the garrison towns of the post-war United Netherlands (Holland and Belgium, 1815-1830).[103] An inveterate gambler, he lost most of his family fortune at the gaming tables.[104] He also found as a non-Dutch speaker that his career prospects were blighted, something to which he refers caustically on his five-month voyage to Java:[105]

> I don't mind serving a prison sentence for the dirt I could dish on a number of phlegmatic Dutchmen, who seem to think that without their language the sun will not shine on us! I could easily respond with exactly the same reply which I gave about a couple of years back to a certain general of that nation [the Netherlands], who said that an officer who didn't know Dutch was as good as useless. At Waterloo, I told him, they didn't ask the Belgians if they knew how to speak Netherlandish![106]

Luckily, his Java War commander, Lieutenant-General Hendrik Merkus de Kock (1779-1845), was broad-minded enough to allow him to file his military reports in French,[107] although we know that De Kock did not rate Errembault highly as a mobile column commander, deeming that he promised much but delivered little ('hij praat veel maar verricht niet al wat hij beloofd').[108]

102 *Stamboek* Errembault.

103 Cruyplants 1883: 56-63.

104 Chambert-Loir 2000: 273.

105 Ibid., citing Errembault 1825-1830: 29 January 1826.

106 Errembault 1825-1830: 29 January 1826: 'je ne crains pas d'aller payer en prison le mal que je peux dire ici de quelques flegmatiques Hollandois, qui croyent que sans leur langue le soleil ne pourroit nous éclairer. Je pourrois encore leur répondre ce que je répondis il y a environs deux ans à un certain général de leur nation, qui disoit qu'un officier qui ne savoit pas le hollandois étoit bon à rien: à Waterloo, lui dis-je, on ne demanda pas aux Belges s'il savoient parler hollandois!'

107 Errembault 1825-1830: 13 May 1827.

108 NL HaNa, Kock, H.M. de, 2.21.05.33, inv nr. 109, 'Aantekeningen van de luitenant-general H.M. de Kock omtrent gedrag en bekwaamheid van verschillende hoofdofficieren', 31 December 1829, stating that Errembault was 'a very old soldier, but does not possess great competence and is not very well respected by his brother officers. He talks much but does not always deliver what he has promised.' '[hij] is een zeer oud militair, maar bezit geen grote bekwaamheden en bij zijn kameraden is hij niet zeer geacht. Hij praat veel maar verricht niet al wat hij beloofd'), De Kock much preferred the battle-scarred infantry Major (post-1843, Major-General) Andreas Victor Michiels (1797-1849), 'General Vandamme' in Multatuli's *Max Havelaar* (1860) novel, 'a brilliant

Like many Belgians in the post-1815 Dutch army, who faced dim career prospects in the post-war United Netherlands, Errembault, then still an infantry captain, transferred in April 1825 to the Dutch colonial army and sailed on the troop ship *De Onderneming* from Texel for Batavia on 13 November, according to his military service record (*Stamboek*). His principal motivation, as we have seen (footnote 61), was money. But once arrived in Batavia on 25 March 1826, he discovered that a war was raging in south-central Java and that there were very real prospects of career advancement as an infantry officer. So, began Errembault's involvement with the Java War, in which he saw his rank rise first to major (8 May 1827) and then lieutenant-colonel (10 March 1830),[109] news of which were both red letter days for the status-conscious Belgian: 'today was one of the most beautiful days of my life' ('ce jour ici a été un des plus beaux de ma vie'),[110] and 'yet another one of the most beautiful days of my life' ('encore une des plus belles [journées] de ma vie').[111]

But such promotions won on the battlefields of south-central Java came at a price: Errembault's health deteriorated and he suffered greatly from internal disorders of the liver and spleen, as well as months on end of diarrhoea.[112] By the war's end, he even found it hard to consume the *grand cru* (superior grade) clarets and burgundies which he always carried with him into battle.[113] On the occasion of his daughter, Antoinette's (1817-1900), thirteenth birthday on 8 February 1830, he noted that 'normally on such a day, I would have drunk a bottle of wine in her honour [...], but in view of the state of my health, I drank medicine [instead]' ('ordinairement, à pareil jour, je buvois une bouteille de vin à sa santé, mais vu l'état de ma santé, j'ai bu des médecines').[114] Embarked on the newly built (1828) merchantman, *Maria*, from Batavia on 17 May 1830 to return home to what would soon be an independent Belgium, his health gave out. Ten days into his four-month voyage his diary entries cease. We know that he visited the tomb of his hero, Napoleon, on Saint Helena in late July, and he made it to the harbour of Hellevoetsluis in South Holland on 15 September 1830, by which time he

and stunningly brave officer, who is full of fire and activity [...] [a man] seemingly made for war' ('een briljant officier, schitterend van dapperheid en vol vuur en activiteit; [...] [een man] is als voor den oorlog gemaakt').

109 *Stamboek* Errembault.

110 Errembault 1825-1830: 14 May 1827.

111 Ibid.: 16 March 1830.

112 Ibid.: 6 February 1830.

113 Chambert-Loir 2000: 286-287.

114 Errembault 1825-1830: 8 February 1830.

was already dying – on 17 September just before midnight he took his last breath in a local lodging house in the harbour town without ever seeing his family again or returning to his native West Flanders.[115]

After four years and two months of warfare – substantial portions of which (for example, the eight months between September 1828 and April 1829; and the period following the last pitched battle with Diponegoro's forces at Siluk in Bantul district on 17 September 1829 up to the prince's capture in Magelang on 28 March 1830) were almost entirely devoid of enemy contact – Errembault's big moment came on 14 October 1829, when he captured Diponegoro's mother, Raden Ayu Mangkorowati (c. 1770-1852), and daughter, Raden Ayu Basah, in a village in southern Kulon Progo.[116] On this occasion, he acted the gentleman, allowing Diponegoro's womenfolk to retain their personal belongings, including a solid gold ingot weighing some three pounds (1.36 kg) and personal jewellery, including several diamond rings and earrings, as well as a small heirloom (*pusaka*) kris or stabbing dagger.[117]

Four months later, on 19 February 1830, Errembault had the chance to encounter Diponegoro in person. This happened as the Java War leader was being escorted by Colonel Jan-Baptist Cleerens (1785-1850), Errembault's field commander and fellow Belgian, from Remokamal in Banyumas (site of Cleerens's first negotiation with the prince, 16 February 1830) to the Dutch garrison town of Menoreh (21 February-8 March). From whence they would eventually travel to Magelang to meet with General De Kock (8 March 1830), the start of an abortive 'peace negotiation' which would end in Diponegoro's arrest (28 March 1830). But Errembault was distinctly unimpressed: Diponegoro 'does not have a very distinguished appearance' ('n'a pas une figure très distinguée'), a judgement which interestingly echoed that of a pre-Java War Yogya Resident,[118] although the young commanders (*basah*)

115 *Stamboek* Errembault.

116 Errembault 1825-1830: 14 October 1829.

117 Ibid.: 15 October 1829: 'elles étoient assez bien garnies en bijoux, la vieille maman avoit un morceau d'or en lingot pesant au moins trois livres; la jeune personnne, assez jolie pour une Javanaise, avoit une petite boîte où il y avoit des boucles d'oreilles à la mode du pays et plusieurs bagues en diamants. Je ne leur ai rien pris et je n'en suis pas fâché; je regrette une seule chose, dont je pouvois sans aucun scrupule m'emparer puisque c'étoit une arme: un joli petit kris dont le fourreau étoit en or, que portait la jeune princesse, épouse de 'Ali-Bassa Mertonégoro.' On Raden Ayu Basah, the widow of one of Diponegoro's army commanders (Gusti Basah, Sentot's elder brother) and the wife of another (Mertonegoro), see Carey 2008:767.

118 This was A.M.Th. Baron de Salis (1788-1834), who had served as Resident of Surakarta (in office 1822-1823) and Acting Resident of Yogyakarta (1 November 1822-11 February 1823). He had met the prince on the occasion of his elevation as guardian (*wakil-Dalem*) to the child

in the prince's entourage, Gondokusumo (c. 1808-1885) and Mertonegoro (c. 1805-post-March 1856), along with the prince's prime minister, Raden Abdullah Danurejo (in office 1828-1830), 'had the finest figures for Javanese that I had ever seen' ('il y avoit trois personnes à sa suite qui ont les plus belles figures javanaises que j'aie encore vues').[119] As for the prince's war aims, in particular his offer to place the Dutch under his personal protection and make all civil and military appointments himself, Errembault dismisses these as proof that Diponegoro had lost his head.[120]

Errembault's admiration for the handsome Javanese in the prince's entourage gives an insight into the social universe he inhabited. For the Belgian officer, a man of limited imagination, there was a clearly defined hierarchy of ethnic types, with the Europeans at the top, and the Javanese coming in a low second just ahead of the 'savages' (*sauvages*), 'semi-savages' (*demi-sauvages*) and 'blacks' (*noirs*) from the outer islands, like the Ambonese, Tidorese, Bugis, Madurese (Sumenep) and Manadonese who constituted the native auxiliaries (*hulptroepen*) on whom the Dutch relied extensively for their victory in the Java War.[121] Indeed, almost as many of these native levies – 7,000 – would die in the war as Europeans (8,000), the majority of

Sultan, Hamengkubuwono V (r. 1822-1826, 1826-1828), on 19 December 1822, when he noted the prince's 'stupid and mysterious' ('dom en raadzig') appearance, and his 'portly build' ('van lichaamgesteldheid log'), the result, in his view, of Diponegoro's 'lazy and indolent life at Tegalrejo'. See Carey 2008: 509; 510 n. 15. Both Errembault's and De Salis's negative views of Diponegoro was not borne out by Errembault's fellow field commanders as Governor-General Johannes van den Bosch pointed out in a dispatch to King Willem I (r. 1813-1840) on 14 March 1830 that 'our officers who have associated much with him [in Magelang] in recent days speak with praise about his intelligence and frank character, and General de Kock completely shares that opinion'. See Carey 2008: 667 n. 42. On Major De Stuers's view that during the war Diponegoro had shown 'a superiority of character little found amongst present-day Javanese, princes' ('une superiorité de caractère peu commune aux princes Javanais de nos jours'), see Kielstra 1896: 92, quoting De Stuers 1833.

119 Errembault 1825-1830: 19 February 1830.

120 Ibid.: 13 October 1827: 'Les propositions de Diponegoro sont si révoltantes qu'il devient tout à fait impossible de traiter avec lui. Il veut bien, dit-il, souffrir les Européens dans l'isle de Java, ainsi que dans l'archipel, et les prendre sous sa protection spéciale. C'est à lui que l'on devroit s'adresser pour tous nos besoins, il aurait aussi les nominations aux emplois civils et militaires. Pour faire de semblables propositions, il faut qu'il aye perdu la tête.'

121 Ibid.: 23 May 1829, on the 'semi-savages' from Makassar who had trashed his camp at Tegalwaru (Sleman district) near the Kali Progo river by stabling their horses in the officers' quarters: 'Quelle difference, depuis un mois peine peu près que j'ai quitté ce camp: il n'est plus à reconnoitre, tellement il est délabré et malpropre. […] Je crois bien que ce qui a le plus contribué à dévaster le camp, ce sont cinq cents demis-sauvages arrivés il y a une quinzaine de jours de l'isle de Macassar [South Celebes]; il y a parmi eux une centaine de cavaliers, qui ne se sont pas gêné pour mettre leurs chevaux dans des baraques d'officiers.'

the latter expiring from a variety of tropical illnesses in the catastrophically unhygienic military hospitals.[122]

Standing apart from these ethnic types were the Chinese, who occupy a special place in Errembault's universe akin to the Jews in Europe – particularly those Polish Jews whom he encountered on the 1812 Russian campaign. In his view they were just predators: 'The island [Java] is full of this scum [*canaille*], who increase in numbers every year and only come here to trick the natives and get their hands on the local commerce. […] They are worse than the Jews of Poland and Amsterdam."[123] Earlier, when newly arrived in Batavia (25 March 1826), he surveyed the street scene from the door of his lodging house in the colonial capital, and noticed the Chinese going door to door with their merchandise borne on the shoulders of Javanese, concluding that, with their ability to turn a quick profit, 'it would take eight top-class Jews to make a single Chinaman' ('Il faut avoir huit Juifs européens de première classe pour faire un Chinois').[124]

Another group completely beyond the pale for the Belgian officer were the Eurasians. Throughout his diary, he refers to these Indo-Europeans, who constituted some 50 per cent of the 15,000 Europeans (including women and children) living in Java in 1819[125] in derogatory terms as *léplape* (Malay: *liplap*). He finds them dishonest,[126] unreliable,[127] and physically unattractive.[128] Amongst those he encounters in his military capacity are a number of field-rank officers (captains and lieutenants),[129]

122 See Djamhari 2004: 81, who states that out of the 6,000 European infantry on active duty in south-central Java between July 1825 and April 1827, 1,603 or 27 per cent were dead by the end of these 21 months.

123 Errembault 1825-1830: 8 February 1827, 'L'isle est pleine de cette canaille, qui tous les ans augmente et qui ne vient ici que pour duper les gens du pays et s'emparer du commerce. […] Toutes les isles de l'Inde en sont infectées. Ici, dans la plus petit dessa [desa], on en trouve au moins un qui s'empare du commerce, c'est encore pire que les juifs en Pologne ou à l'Amsterdam.'

124 Ibid.: 4 April 1826.

125 Bosma 2007: 280. In 1819-1823, there were some 2,752 European male residents aged sixteen and over in the Java in a population (Bosma 2007: 280-282) where there were 94,441 Chinese and 4,499,250 indigenous inhabitants, according to Raffles's 1815 census (Raffles 1817: I, 62 facing). See also Bosma and Raben 2008: 22, who state that '[i]n the 19th century about 80 per cent of the Europeans in the Dutch East Indies were local-born and most of them had one or more local-born ancestors'.

126 Errembault 1825-1830: 13 October 1826.

127 Ibid.: 9 January 1829.

128 Ibid.: 27 October 1827, where Errembault relates his attendance at a society ball (*bal de société*) in Semarang where the majority of the guests were Eurasians (*léplape*) of whom only one rather large woman was at all attractive, the rest being 'positive antidotes to feelings of passion' ('les autres étoient de véritables remèdes d'amour').

129 Ibid.: 10 May 1827.

who are all distinctly below par. One of these is an engineer officer tasked with building a new redoubt (*benteng*) at Grogol near the Sungai (River) Progo. Errembault is caustic: '[N]ever in my life have I seen a fortification work so badly done. The engineer lieutenant tasked with this job is a Eurasian [*léplape*] who hasn't a clue. He is indeed an officer of the corps of military engineers, but an engineer officer? That is another matter entirely!'[130]

But in Errembault's case there was an interesting evolution. As the war progressed, at least in the case of the native inhabitants of Java and the local fighting men whom he encountered – not the Chinese or the Eurasians – a shift appears to have taken place in his mindset. At the beginning he is full of contempt for Diponegoro's troops, referring to them alternately as '*canaille*' (scum), '*gueusards*' (critters), and '*brandales*' (bandits).[131] When he encounters them on the battlefield, he kills them on the spot (those are his orders) and develops his own diary terminology for the beheadings – 'shortening [them] by a few inches' ('raccourci de quelques pouces'),[132] or 'putting their heads lower than their shoulders' ('la tête mise en basse des épaules').[133] As for spies, justice is summary, as Errembault explains in his diary – when suspects are caught wandering through his camp in eastern Bagelen after nightfall, he 'conducts them to the riverbank and, dealing them each an ounce of lead through their heads, they were sent to serve as food for the fishes of the [Sungai/River] Bogowonto'.[134]

Armed 'rebels' found in the open are likewise dealt with in summary fashion. There are no military tribunals. Instead, their heads are usually struck off and put on pikes or trees 'to serve as a warning for "amateurs" [would-be rebels]'.[135] This practice of displaying severed heads – something

130 Ibid.: 25 July 1828: 'Car de ma vie je n'ai vu un ouvrage de fortification [Benteng Grogol near the Sungai/River Progo] aussi mal fait. Le lieutenant de génie qui a été chargé de la direction de cet ouvrage est un léplape qui ne s'y entends guères. Il est bien officier de l'arme de génie, mais officier de génie, cela fait deux choses bien différentes.'

131 Ibid.: 17 August 1826, 2 September 1826, and 5 February 1828.

132 Ibid.: 27 August 1828.

133 Ibid.: 8 October 1827.

134 Ibid.: 13 February 1828: 'La nuit passé, une patrouille du regent de Kandal a arrêté deux individus qui rôdoient dans la camp et les a conduit à la baraque de son chef. […] Je les ai fait interroger de nouveau et je n'ai pu obtenir aucune réponse, ni par promesses, ni par menaces. Je les ai donc faire conduire sur le bord de la rivière et, moyennant chacun une once de plomb qui leur a traversé la tête, il sont allés server de nourriture aux poissons du Bogowonto.'

135 Ibid.: 2 September 1826: 'Ce matin à cinq heures, j'ai reçu l'ordre de partir avec le piquet composés de quatre-vingt hommes, […] à trois ou quatre piliers [1 pilier = 1.5 km on Java]. On m'a dit en même temps fait dire que je devois tuer tout ce que je rencontrerois de suspect. J'ai vu une dizaine de geusards, dont trois étoient armés de lances, qu'ils ont jettées aussitôt qu'ils

which Diponegoro also used from time to time[136] – is clearly visible in contemporary wartime sketches.[137]

While the majority of Errembault's battlefield encounters are small scale, there were two which were considerably more impressive. The first was when he participated in the dawn storming of Diponegoro's fortified position at Plered, on 9 June 1826. This was his baptism of fire in the Java War and involved him in participating as an infantry commander in a frontal assault of 900 Dutch and Javanese troops on the high brick-walled citadel of the seventeenth-century *kraton.* After the last shots had died away and the final bayonet thrusts dealt at three o'clock in the afternoon perhaps as many as 700 of the Javanese defenders lay dead. Steeled as he was by his years of fighting in Europe (1806-1815) during the Napoleonic Wars, even Errembault admitted that this battle was a massacre, 'un carnage affreux' ('an awful carnage').[138]

The second, which took place outside Kota Gede on 18 July 1827, is more complex not only in its sheer scale – Errembault's 900-strong column confronted an estimated 7,000 of Diponegoro's elite troops, including his famed Bulkios modelled on the Ottoman-Turkish Bölüki (*bölük* is Turkish for a squad or troop) commanded by the Java War leader himself and eight of his fellow princes[139] – but also because it was during this encounter that Errembault was able to observe the military advantages which the Javanese derived from their immense 18-foot pikes. If used skilfully, these could dismount European cavalrymen before they could reload their cumbersome cavalry carbines.[140] This was a lesson which the British had learnt to their cost during their assault on Yogyakarta on 20 June 1812 – one of their advance cavalry units of 22nd Light Dragoons clearing the highway in advance of the main British-Indian force had been wiped out at a narrow river gorge along the Kali Gajahwong at Papringan by a Yogya court commander using precisely these tactics.[141]

m'ont aperçu. Je suis parti au galop sur eux; j'en ai joint deux, que j'ai ramenés sur la route, où, sans autre forme de procès, je les ai fait raccourcir de quelques pouces. J'ai ensuite fait attacher leurs têtes à deux arbres pour servir d'avis aux amateurs.'

136 De Stuers 1833: 58-59; Chambert-Loir 2000: 284-285; Carey 2008: 124.

137 See, for example, 'Maron in Baglen Ao.1829', Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. 1983-1868, a watercolour-on-paper sketch dating from the last year of the Java War in 1829 showing a line of severed heads on pikes on the highway outside the Dutch fort of Maron in eastern Bagelen.

138 Errembault 1825-1830: 9 June 1826.

139 Ibid.: 18 July 1827.

140 Thorn 1815: 177-178.

141 Carey 1992: 427 n. 238; Carey 2008: 333.

After a hard day's fighting Errembault concluded that if Diponegoro's Javanese troops had but a 'quarter of the courage of a European we would soon be destroyed. Their great superiority in numbers and the [sheer] length of their pikes would have overwhelmed us' ('si un Javanais avoit en courage le quart de ce qu'a un Européen, nous serions bientôt tous détruits. La grande supériorité qu'ils ont sur nous par le nombre et la longueur de leurs piques nous auroit bientôt accablés').[142] But already, as he entered his second year as a column commander, a new-found respect was beginning to creep into Errembault's diary entries. No longer dismissed as mere *canaille* (scum) and *gueusards* (critters), he now writes of the 'intrepidness' of Diponegoro's regular troops and the 'priests' – members of the religious (*santri*) fighting units like the elite Barjumungah regiment – whom he encounters in battle ('nous avons affaire aux troupes réglées de Dipo Negoro et aux prêtres, qui sont assez intrépides').[143] Diponegoro's teenage army commander, Sentot Ali Basah (c. 1808-1855), also commands the Belgian officer's respect. Renowned in Dutch ranks for his lightning attacks and deadly ambuscades,[144] Errembault reports with succinct clarity one of the most stunning of these in his diary, namely Sentot's comprehensive destruction of Major Hendrik Frederik Bushkens's 8th Mobile column in Banyumas on 3 October 1828.[145]

The way in which some of Diponegoro's commanders met their deaths likewise impresses the Belgian officer with its admirable stoicism. Writing of the execution of a 'rebel chief' at Errembault's camp at Pisangan in Sleman district to the north-west of Yogya in July 1826 just two months after his deployment in south-central Java, he notes how, when ordered to be beheaded with his own sabre, the rebel chief 'looked on death with a composure worthy of ancient times, stating firmly right up to the last that he was a rebel [*brandal*], who had done us much harm, and that if he was given his liberty, he would continue to [harm] us again'.[146]

Whereas in his first year of Java War campaigning, Errembault had considered that only the 75 European troops in his 400-strong mobile column

142 Errembault 1825-1830: 18 July 1827.

143 Ibid.: 1 August 1828.

144 Carey 2008: 649, citing De Stuers 1833.

145 Errembault 1825-1830: 4 October 1828.

146 Ibid.: 9 July 1826: 'Nous avons rencontré une vingtaine d'hommes armés, dont le chef a été pris et qui, après l'avoir ramené à Pisangan, il a eu la tête tranchée avec son proper sabre. Il a vu la mort avec un sang froid digne du vieux temps, en avouant, avec fermeté au dernier moment, qu'il étoit brandale, qu'il nous avoit fait beaucoup de mal et que, si on lui donnoit sa grâce, il nous en feroit encore.'

were to be relied upon at critical battlefield situations,[147] by the start of his third year as a column commander in July 1828, he was beginning to sing a very different tune: 'For my own part, I prefer commanding native troops to Europeans; I don't have as much illness [in the ranks], and, if they are properly led, they fight just as well [as Europeans].' ('Pour mon compte particulier, je préfère commander les indigènes à des Européens: je n'ai autant de maladies, et lorsqu'ils sont bien conduits, ils se battent également.')[148] Although still characterized as 'savages' or 'semi-savages', the Buginese and Makassarese troops which he commanded are now referred to as all 'good soldiers' ('troupes de l'isle de Macassar qui sont tous de bons soldats').[149] He is also full of admiration for their bare-back riding skills and ability to use their cavalry lances on horseback.[150] At the same time, the 200 Tidorese auxiliaries attached to his mobile column, armed with bows and arrows, knew 'how to fight extremely well and made excellent scouts' ('deux cents Tidoriens, troupes de secours, qui se battent fort bien et sont d'excellents éclaireurs').[151]

By this time, in the last two years of the war, Errembault was reserving his greatest bile for 'the gentlemen expeditionaries' ('messieurs les expéditionnaires'), namely the 3,145 officers and men of the Expeditionaire Afdeling (Expeditionary Division, comprising three battalions of infantry and supporting cavalry and artillery units), who had reached Java in two main batches between 1827 and 1828. Sent as much needed reinforcements for the hard-pressed colonial army (Nederlandsche Oost-Indische Leger, NOIL), the arrival of these troops fresh from Europe proved to be a mixed blessing. The most serious problem was their ignorance of local conditions in Java and contempt for the natives (*inlander*) whom their superior officers regarded as 'dogs' (*chiens*).[152] At a time in the last two years of the war when some *benteng* (military redoubt) commanders were attempting to win over the local population around their fortified outposts by promising them free ploughs, draught animals, seeds and higher daily wages for fortification

147 Ibid.: 4 August 1826.

148 Ibid.: 10 July 1828.

149 Ibid.: 13 July 1828.

150 Ibid.: 3 August 1829: 'cent sont à cheval et manient parfaitement la lance; ils sont sur leurs chevaux sans aucune selle ni couverte, absolument à poil nud, et n'ont pour toute bride pour les conduire qu'un morceau de bois passant dans la bouche attaché avec une corde. Des officiers qui ont fait la campagne des Célèbes au commencement de l'année 1825, et qui se sont battus contre eux, disent qu'ils sont très adroits.'

151 Ibid.: 6 September 1829.

152 Ibid.: 20 February 1829.

repair work,[153] the Expeditionary Division commanders showed they had no understanding of how to win the hearts and minds of the local population. On two occasions within months of each other in May and August 1828, under separate commanders, Colonel (post-1834, Major-General) Auguste Joseph Jacob Vermersch (1779-1841) and Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph Ledel (1779-1835), and in different parts of south-central Java (eastern Bagelen and Sleman), these expeditionary troops carried out the most egregious massacres of Javanese civilians.[154]

These were smaller scale Java War equivalents of the My Lai massacre in Vietnam (16 May 1968), when more than 400 unarmed civilians were killed by US troops during the Second Indochina War (1955-1975). Like Lieutenant William Calley Jr's war crime, Lieutenant-Colonel Ledel's massacre of innocent women and children had devastating consequences: Errembault expressed his abomination, confiding in his diary that:

> killing the enemy or an armed rebel [is one thing], but mercilessly wiping out women and children, that is a horror! I was ashamed this morning when I passed in front of the infantrymen's bivouac and heard them boasting about the excesses of cruelty to which they had given themselves over the previous night. If these gentlemen expeditionaries think that they will end the war in this fashion, they are very much mistaken. Quite the contrary it is the very means of prolonging it, because, in acting thus, instead of attracting the local inhabitants to our cause, we push them [far] away.[155]

Conclusion

Although Errembault's end was tragic, the evolution of his racial attitudes in the last two years of the war shows that at least he had begun to think like a

153 Carey 2008: 651-652.

154 Errembault 1825-1830: 23 August 1828.

155 Ibid.: 23 August 1828: 'Le lieutenant-kolonel [Joseph Ledel] a fait partir pendant la nuit une patrouille de cents hommes, pour aller dans un dessa [desa] à deux piliers [3 km], afin d'y surprendre deux cents rebels qu'on lui avoit rapport devoir s'y trouver, mais il n'y avoit que des habitans tranquillement couchés près de leurs femmes et de leurs enfants, que les flanqueurs ont inhumainement percés de coups de bayonnettes. Tuons l'ennemi ou le rebelle armé, mais immoler sans pitié des femmes et des enfants, cela fait horreur. J'étois honteux ce matin, en passant devant le bivouac des flanqueurs, de les entendre se vanter des excès de crauté auxquels ils s'étoient livrés pendant la nuit. Messieurs les expéditionnaires croyent finir la guerre de cette manière, mais ils se trompent beaucoup. C'est au contraire le véritable moyen de la prolonger, car en agissants de cette manière, au lieu d'attirer les habitans à nous, nous les éloignons.'

colonial rather than a European newcomer, one of the *baroe datang* who had so shocked the mestizo elite in Batavia in 1816. At the very least he saw his loyalties lie foursquare with the colonial army rather than the ignoramuses of the Expeditionary Division. But, after Diponegoro's capture and the collapse of his Javanese-Islamic *prang sabil* (holy war), a new era dawned in the Indies. This was a racialized and deeply patriarchal universe in which there would be scant room for Eurasians (*liplap*), *pribumi* (indigenous Indonesians) and women at the top table of the colonial state. But it did not appear like the goddess Minerva fully formed from the brow of Zeus. It was honed and developed with increasing momentum in the three decades which followed the demise of the Dutch East India Company in 1799. It also owed much to the protean energies of three autocrats, Daendels, Raffles and Johannes van den Bosch (1780-1844; governor-general, 1830-1832 and Commissioner-General, 1832-1834), architect of the post-Java War Cultivation System (1830-1870). This earned 832 million guilders for the Dutch state – equivalent of US$11 trillion in today's money or just over half the annual GDP of the present-day (2020) US economy. No part of Indies society was left untouched. Like a sour dough it covered the land. A new racially charged and sexually exploitative colonialism would rule the roost for the next century and more (1830-1942). It would take a movement of national liberation and the emergence of a new Asian power – imperial Japan – to accomplish its dismantlement. But even today we live in its shadow and Frantz Fanon's warning still rings in our ears because we have yet to decolonize our minds: 'Imperialism leaves behind germs of rot which we must clinically detect and remove (not just) from our land but from our minds as well."[156]

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2 *Hostis Humanis Generis*

The Invention of the 'Warlike Dayak Race' during the 'War on Piracy' in Borneo, 1830-1848

Farish A. Noor

Abstract
The so-called 'war on piracy' that was waged along the northern coast of Borneo from the late 1830s to the 1840s was justified in terms of a naval security operation, intended to guarantee freedom of navigation and free trade. In the course of this campaign, the Dayaks of Sarawak were brought into the narrative and cast as a warlike race, who were thought to be susceptible to the manipulation of Malay and Arab pirate lords. This chapter looks at how the Dayaks of Borneo were framed in debilitating terms, as a race that was inherently violent and yet could be saved by Western colonial intervention. The result of this was the discursive construction of the Dayak as the embodiment of primitive violence, at a time when scientific racism was the norm.

Keywords: colonialism, colonial wars, scientific racism, stereotypes

Out of Place Down the Perak River: The 'Warring Dayak' as a Floating Signifier[1]

> From biblical times to the present, the notion of the Wild Man was associated with the parts of the wilderness – the desert, forest, jungle – those parts of the physical world that had not yet been domesticated or marked out for demarcation in any significant way. As one after another of these wildernesses were brought under control, the idea of the Wild Man was despatialized.[2]
> – Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse*

1 It should be noted that the term 'Dayak' is a general term that refers to the various subethnic communities of interior Borneo, and it includes the Ibans, Kayans, Kenyahs and others; and that they Dayaks cannot be seen as a homogenous singular community.
2 White 1978: 153.

Noor, Farish A., and Peter Carey (eds): *Racial Difference and the Colonial Wars of 19th Century Southeast Asia*. Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press 2021
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On 2 November 1875 an event took place at Pasir Salak by the Perak River in the kingdom of Perak in the Malay Peninsula that would determine British-Malay relations for decades to come. The British colonial Resident James Wheeler Woodford Birch (1826-1875; in office, 1874-1875) – formerly Colonial Secretary in Singapore and later British Resident appointed to the court of Perak based at Kuala Kangsar – was attacked in the bathing house by the riverbank, after which he was stabbed repeatedly and killed outside the house.[3] How Birch found himself along the Perak River is a story that is linked to Britain's 'forward movement' into the Malay kingdoms of the peninsula. Following the signing of the Pangkor Agreement (20 January 1874) between the British and the ruler of Perak, Raja Abdullah Muhammad Shah II (1842-1922, r. 1874-1876),[4] the ruler of Perak would be compelled to accept the presence of a British colonial Resident in court, who would effectively dictate matters of political and economic policy, while leaving the ruler in charge of matters pertaining to religion and Malay customs.

Yet Britain's penetration into the Malay lands and involvement in Malay politics came at a time when the British possessed little reliable information about Malay affairs. With scant political and economic intelligence to develop a coherent colonial policy at his disposal, Governor Andrew Clarke (1824-1902; in office, 1873-1875) introduced the Resident system whereby Britain would appoint Residents to the courts of the Malay states that would later come under their control. One of the first to be given that task was Birch, and his role as Resident was to impress upon the ruler and nobles of Perak that they were no longer the real power in the state. By the terms of the Pangkor Agreement, the collection of local revenue taxes from the people would no longer be the prerogative of the nobles of Perak, and this was one

3 Along with Birch several others were also killed, including Birch's interpreter Arshad, the boatman Din Larut and a sepoy named Hit Sersing. Six other men were also wounded in the attack (London Gazette 1876).

4 Raja Abdullah was willing to accept the terms of the Pangkor Agreement (also referred to as the Pangkor Treaty of 1874) as it meant that the British would recognize him as the sole and rightful ruler of the kingdom, while his contender Sultan Ismail would be given an honorary pension of 1,000 Mexican pesos per month for life. (Additionally, Perak also ceded control of Dinding and Pangkor Island to the British government.) The agreement, however, stated that Raja Abdullah and his successors would have to accept the presence of a British colonial Resident at their court, who would henceforth 'advise' the ruler on matters of state, particularly in the domains of politics and economic management. The Pangkor Treaty set the tone for the other treaties that would be signed with the Malay rulers in the future, whereby real political and economic power would pass into the hands of the British, while the Malay rulers would be left to decide on matters related to native customs and religion instead.

of the most contentious articles of the agreement. On the day that he was killed, Birch was in Pasir Salak to announce these new changes, which came in the form of a proclamation that was put on public display. The nailing of the proclamation to a wall was the catalyst that sparked off the attack and it was this that led to Birch's end at the hands of Lela Pandak Lam, the Datuk Maharaja Lela of Perak, and his followers on 2 November 1875.[5] News of Birch's killing spread quickly across the land, and there then followed a series of British-led security operations that were intended to contain what came to be called the Perak revolt.[6] By the end of it all Raja Abdullah and Ngah Ibrahim would be accused of supporting and protecting the Malay nobles who had risen up against the British, and on 21 July 1876 were sent into exile in the Seychelles; while Datuk Maharaja Lela was executed on 20 January 1877.

Forever on the lookout for empire-hating adversaries to spook their readers back home, the British press would go overboard with lashings of clichés aplenty in the reports they produced, some of which gave the impression that the entire Malay Peninsula was in a state of turmoil and that Britain was at war with the entire Malay race.[7] *The Graphic* declared that 'the conflict in Perak seems to have originated in much the same way as most of our difficulties with dark-skinned semi-civilised tribes'.[8] That the British would ultimately prevail in the conflict was, for *The Graphic*, an expected outcome for 'brave as they may be they [the Malays] cannot stand against a force armed with rockets, and all the other appliances of modern warfare'[9] and ultimately the Malays of Perak would find themselves on the losing end when 'their villages have been burnt, their crops devastated,

5 See the eyewitness testimonies of Mahomed Noor and Ahmid in London Gazette 1876.

6 On 6 November 1785, four days after Birch's death, a force was sent to defeat the Malays that was led by Captain William Innes (1841-1875) who commanded 60 British troops along with 60 Sikh soldiers and 50 Malay police officers, armed with guns and rockets. The battle took place at Sempang, and *The Graphic* reported that the Malays had declared a 'Jehad' (Jihad) and were 'fighting in their white bajus (shirts), the signal for a contest to the death' (The Graphic 1875).

7 The 'little war' in Perak was magnified and inflated by the British press in no uncertain terms. On 20 November 1875, *The Graphic* reported that the Malays who opposed the British were a race of religious fanatics and extremists, whom they compared to the Acehnese of Sumatra, who had likewise resisted Dutch attempts to colonize their land. *The Graphic*'s report stated that 'unfortunately there was a strong party which objected to order, which held that infidels were a great deal too much considered, and which had heard that in Acheen [Aceh] the faithful were warring the infidels fairly out. The defeated pretender to Perak, *Sultan Ismail, availed himself to this feeling, called on the fanatics as well as his personal partisans, and, it is suspected, arranged for a religious war*' (The Graphic 1875; emphasis mine).

8 The Graphic 1876.

9 Ibid.

and before long the survivors will find themselves compelled to submit to British rule, and their country overrun by a swarm of immigrant Chinese'.[10]

British views of the Malays of the peninsula were by then diverse and complex. Earlier writers like John Anderson and Sherard Osborn had written positively about Malay industry and commerce, with Anderson arguing against the popular view of the Malays as a piratical people and Osborn lauding them for their resistance against Siamese expansionism.[11] But in the popular British press the Malays were sometimes described as 'quarrelsome' and 'dangerous' when provoked, and *The Graphic*'s report even included an engraving with the image of 'wild Malays from the interior of the Peninsula'.[12] That the Malays had been defined as 'wild' was typical of the manner in which non-Western subjects were then cast as the constitutive Other to the Western norm during the age of empire, and the trope of the 'wild native Other' had been put to effective use on many other occasions before and after Britain's expansion into the Malay lands. The image of the 'wild man', however, stuck, and in the years to come would be reactivated time and again whenever the tale of Birch's untimely end was recounted but successive generations of empire-builders.

Decades later, in 1898, the story of Birch's riverside demise was retold by another British colony builder, Frank Athelstane Swettenham (1850-1946), in a short story about the Perak uprising that he recounted to a writer while he was in London.[13] Swettenham (who was then the Resident-General of the Federated Malay States, 1896-1901), recalled how he was then placed in charge of the pacification of Larut, and was moving further up the Perak River when Birch was killed. His brief account was published in the *World Wide Magazine*, and as was the case with earlier accounts in the British press this tale also portrayed the Malays as warlike when provoked. Swettenham was not exactly kind in his portrait of Birch, whom he painted in a somewhat unflattering light – as a heavy-footed, clumsy and ignorant Englishman who was bound to get himself into trouble with the Malays.[14]

On the whole Swettenham's recounting of the Perak uprising did not differ much from earlier accounts that were given in numerous reports

10 Ibid.

11 Anderson 1826; Osborn 1857.

12 The Graphic 1875.

13 Swettenham 1898.

14 In the opening paragraphs of his story Swettenham gave a rather negative view of Birch, who, he claimed, 'did not speak Malay, and knew very little about the country or the people. Worse still, he was constantly bothering the Sultan about business matters and the introduction of reforms' (Swettenham 1898: 11).

and press cuttings. But unlike the earlier reports that were published in 1875-1876 (which included the testimonies and viewpoints of the Malays who were caught on both sides of the conflict), in this later retelling of events the reader can see the workings of a simpler oppositional binary that juxtaposed the modern and disciplined European colonizers against the violent and irrational native Other. What is interesting about this account of the Perak revolt are the illustrations that came with the story – three in total – that presented the Malays in visual form.

Produced by the prolific Victorian illustrator Harold Robert Millar (1869-1942) – whose list of accomplishments included his illustrations for Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901), H. Rider Haggard's *The Brethren* (1904) and the 1895 edition of James Morier's *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan* (1824) – the three images that were produced for Swettenham's short story covered the key episodes that took place in Perak: The killing of Birch, Swettenham upriver and Swettenham trying to evade a Malay ambush. (Note that Swettenham got two images while the less fortunate Birch only got one.[15]) But for reasons that we shall perhaps never know, *all* the Malays who are depicted by Millar in his illustrations do not look like Malays at all, but are depicted as *Dayaks* – down to the single-edged *mandau* (*parang ilang*) with which 'Siputum dealt him [Birch] a terrific blow over the head'.[16]

Just how a bunch of *mandau*-wielding Dayaks found themselves up the Perak River and on to the pages of Swettenham's account published in the *World Wide Magazine* is an interesting case of a signifier gone nomadic. Swettenham didn't draw the images as he certainly knew what Malays looked like for he had spent years of his life among them, but Millar seems to have dipped his hand into the bucket of malevolent Orientalist tropes and found the Dayak a convenient one to work with. As I have noted elsewhere,[17] by the nineteenth century the non-Western Other had come to be known and rendered knowable in no uncertain terms as a result of the enormous amount of data gathering that had accompanied the train of empire. The Asiatic Other had been documented and depicted again and again by Western illustrators – some of whom were themselves active empire-builders – and such images had been in circulation in the Western world for decades. From Stamford Raffles's images (drawn by William Daniell of *Oriental Scenery* [1795-1808] fame) of the Javanese that were captured in his *History of Java* (1817) to John Crawfurd's images of Burmans, Malays, Siamese and

15 Swettenham 1898: 13, 14, 16.
16 Ibid.: 13.
17 Noor 2016.

Cochinchinese that were found in the books he wrote,[18] the people of Southeast Asia – like other Asians and Africans – had entered the drawing rooms and salons of the West in pictorial form and were being gazed at by Europeans thousands of miles away.

This abiding interest in Asians and all things Asiatic did not, however, mean that the Asians had any say in how they were depicted, or that these depictions were necessarily accurate. One particular group of Southeast Asians that was constantly being reproduced and called upon to play the part of the 'warlike' and 'wild' Other were the various subethnic groups of Borneo generally referred to as the 'Dayaks', who fed the popular Orientalist imaginary with tales of bloodlust and terror, and who were sometimes shoved into other broader Asiatic categories to add a touch of colour. In Blackie and Son's *Comprehensive Atlas & Geography of the World* published in 1882, for instance, is a chromolithograph of 'The Malay Race' that featured samples of Southeast Asians taken from the earlier works of Marryat, Hardouin and Ritter and others, 'engraved from the most authentic sources'.[19] Included in the image are two armed Dayaks from the work of Marryat. That the lithograph lumped together Dayaks from Borneo and Javanese from Java together as 'Malays' did not seem to matter by then, for the native Other had been epistemically arrested for good and shoved into categories not of their own choosing.

To be violent, it seemed, was to be Dayak; and to be Dayak meant to be violent as well. (So much so that when the Malays in Swettenham's story lost their temper they too were depicted by Millar in full Dayak mode.) Lazy visualization had won out in the case of the *World Wide Magazine*, but this was not an isolated instance of arresting visuals taking over a more nuanced and complex story. Anyone who doubted this simply had to look at the European illustrations produced by European illustrators for European books written by European authors, and would be assured that the Dayaks in general were a naturally violent race predisposed towards doing violent things. But how did this come about? How did the Dayak end up being discursively reduced in such essentialist terms as the epitome of Asiatic violence? The answer to the question lies in part in the manner in which the Dayaks as a people were discursively framed as the oppositional Other during the so-called 'war on piracy' in Borneo decades earlier, and how the image of the warlike Dayak entered the European imaginary thanks to the writings of a host of Western authors in search of an enemy to demonize.

18 Crawfurd 1820, 1829, 1830.

19 Blackie 1882. Sources for the samples include images taken from Marryat 1848 and Hardouin and Ritter 1872 (first published 1855).

The Invention of the Warlike Dayak Race: Images, Colonial Stereotypes and the Workings of Imperial Discourse

> Though vigorously disavowed, race has played a historically determining role in the self-definition of Britain as a nation. There is a long history to, and many discursive slippages between, race and nation in imperial discourse.[20]
>
> – Stuart Hall, *Familiar Stranger*

Just how and why the Dayaks of Borneo entered the European imaginary the way they did has a lot to do with the march of empire across Southeast Asia and the development of the knowledge that accompanied that process. As Cohn has noted, an empire's foundations were laid upon a vast bedrock of knowledge about the lands and peoples who came under colonial rule, and this knowledge came in the form of books that were crammed with detailed maps, statistics and accounts of native languages and histories that would later be instrumentalized according to the logic of colonial capitalism.[21] This was certainly the case in India as Cohn has discussed, and it was equally true of Southeast Asia as well. Long before the Dayaks of Borneo were seen and cast as the adversaries to the colonial enterprise, the region had already been studied by the likes of Marsden (whose work on Sumatra was one of the first of its kind, published in 1783) and Hunt (whose 1812 report on Borneo was sent directly to Stamford Raffles (1781-1826) who was then Britain's lieutenant-governor (1811-1816) of the newly conquered Java).

Britain's own involvement in Borneo (Kalimantan) was a cloudy affair that had less to do with British foreign policy at the beginning and more to do with the ambitions of the adventurer James Brooke (1803-1868), who was a professed fanboy of his hero Raffles and who had taken it upon himself to establish a British presence along the north coast of Borneo in order 'to awaken the spirit of slumbering philanthropy with regards to these islands; to carry Sir Stamford Raffles's views in Java over the whole Archipelago'.[22] The former British East India Company man (who had left the company's service after being himself wounded during the First Anglo-Burmese War) had reinvented himself as a free agent, and had made the journey to Borneo for the sake of '*adding to knowledge, increasing trade, and spreading Christianity*'.[23]

20 Hall 2017: 180.
21 Cohn 1996.
22 Brooke, in Keppel 1846: I, 4.
23 Ibid.: I, 7; emphasis mine.

Once in Borneo (Sarawak), Brooke began negotiations with the native rulers Rajah Muda Hassim and the Pangeran Mahkota, who served the kingdom of Brunei. Hostile to other competing European powers, Brooke insisted that the Bruneians should not accept any Dutch merchants in Sarawak at all. Though he had been sent to Sarawak to convey the thanks of the British governor in Singapore, Brooke unilaterally initiated negotiations with the local rulers and expressed hostile opinions about other European traders in the region. Brooke's fortunes would turn for the better on 4 November 1840, when he was invited to stay by Rajah Muda Hassim, whose forces were unable to bring to heel recalcitrant Dayaks opposed to Bruneian rule. What is sometimes forgotten is the fact that Brooke would assume command over Sarawak after he and two hundred of his men surrounded the residence of Rajah Muda Hassim and forced the latter to concede to his demands.[24] The Rajah Muda offered Brooke command over the territories of Siniawan and Sarawak, and gave him the right to bear the title of 'rajah' as well. Rajah Muda Hassim was then the heir-presumptive and regent of Brunei, but he had no right to relinquish control over Siniawan and Sarawak to anyone. In retrospect, it is mind-boggling that the Brooke 'kingdom' which lasted up to the mid-twentieth century took off from such shaky foundations.

Less shaky, however, was the military response that soon followed. In the years to come James Brooke, with the help of the British Navy, would begin a long and sustained campaign against 'native piracy' along the entire northern coastline of Borneo. The final outcome of this campaign was the fall of the kingdom of Brunei; which by the end of it would be blamed for the 'pirate menace' in Southeast Asian waters and cast as the 'den of piracy'.[25] Rear Admiral Sir Thomas Cochrane (1789-1872) would lead the British fleet that would bomb the port city on 8 July 1846.[26] Unable to defend itself against advanced British weaponry, Brunei fell on the same day and Mundy duly noted that 'the city, which having flourished five hundred years under Mohammedan rule, now fell before the arms of a Christian power'.[27]

24 Knapman notes that Brooke had demanded payment for his services to the Rajah Muda in the form of a transaction of antimony. Upon Brooke's return to Sarawak the Rajah Muda was unable (or unwilling) to abide by their agreement and that became the justification for Brooke's march on the Raja Muda's compound and his threat to initiate an uprising of his own. See Knapman 2017: 158-160, 161.

25 Mundy 1848: II, 142.

26 Ibid.: II, 145-152.

27 Ibid.: II, 152.

Shortly after the fall of Brunei and the culmination of the war on piracy, several of those who had taken part in the campaign would record their experiences and impressions for posterity. This was not the first time that a British military campaign had been recorded in detail, and one can think of the works of Snodgrass and Osborn, who had likewise recorded their experience in the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-1826) and the blockade of the kingdom of Kedah before and after the Borneo campaign.[28] How Snodgrass and Osborn saw their Asian counterparts and opponents is interesting for comparative purposes, for Snodgrass was generally dismissive and contemptuous of the Burmans while Osborn was evidently sympathetic to the Malays whom he felt were the victims of Siamese aggression. A comparison of the works of Snodgrass and Osborn shows that there was not always a consensus on whether the native Other was truly an enemy: Osborn's view was that the Malays of Kedah were the victims of Siamese aggression, and that their defensive actions were justifiable under the circumstances. It should also be remembered that piracy was equally a problem for many Southeast Asian and East Asian polities and that in many parts of the region it was regarded as a grave crime. Milton described how convicted pirates in Japan would be put to death in a gruesome manner, speared from all sides and 'sometimes so many spears were employed that the condemned man looked like a giant hedgehog'.[29]

But in the writings about the campaign in Borneo, we see how a general consensus of opinion among those who took part in it and chose to write about it later would develop, and in many ways their views of the Malays of Brunei and the Dayaks of Borneo were influenced by the views of James Brooke, who was the man at the centre of it all. Tarling[30] has noted how British policy in the Malay Peninsula, North Borneo and the Philippines developed according to the geo-economic and geo-strategic needs and realities of the time: The loss of cargoes and the threat to commercial shipping posed by maritime raiders from Sulu would sway opinion among policymakers, while commercial interests in Singapore, Penang and back in England would side with Brooke, whose stand against 'native piracy' suited their commercial interests as well. (Though back in England Brooke had also become a contentious figure and was criticized by groups like the

28 Snodgrass 1827; Osborn 1857.

29 Milton 2002: 102.

30 Tarling 1969, 1978.

Aborigines' Protection Society[31] on the grounds that he did not have the right to unilaterally decide who was an enemy and who was not.[32])

James Brooke would remain a divisive figure though not long after his passing he would be valorized as a visionary liberal and elevated to the pantheon of Britain's great empire-builders by the likes of St John and Baring Gould and Bampfylde.[33] But Brooke's liberalism extended only as far as the limits of his own ethno-nationalist universe and did not include the Asians he ruled over: It was no secret that Brooke regarded the Dayaks of Sarawak as 'wild' and 'in a low condition',[34] though he felt that 'theirs is an innocent state' and he considered them 'capable of being easily raised in the scale of society' if they could be pacified and brought under Western rule.[35] Brooke regarded the Chinese as 'corrupt, supple and exacting, yielding to their superiors and tyrannical to those who fall under their power'.[36] Those of half-Arab descent were regarded by him as potential troublemakers, for he was convinced that many of the maritime raiders of the region were under the command of such 'half-bred Arab Seriffs [sic], who, possessing themselves of the territory of some Malay state, form a nucleus for piracy, a rendezvous and market for all the roving fleets'.[37] The Malays were seen by him as often treacherous and cowardly, and 'Malay governments were so bad', that 'any attempt to govern without a change of these abuses would be impossible'.[38] When he visited the kingdom of Brunei, Brooke found it to be in a 'miserable state'[39]

31 The Aborigines' Protection Society was formed in 1837 by anti-slavery campaigners such as Thomas Hodgkin, Thomas Fowell Buxton, William Allen and Thomas Clarkson. After the end of the slave trade in England with the passing of the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, members of anti-slavery movement began to take an interest in the welfare of native communities in Africa and Asia that were under British colonial rule. James Brooke was a regular target by the society, which lobbied the British Parliament on a number of occasions and called for an investigation into the conduct of Brooke in Borneo. See Illustrated London News 1850.

32 Runciman notes that a Commission of Enquiry was set up to investigate Brooke's activities in Sarawak and that the findings of the commission were quite damaging to Brooke. It found that he had never been a trader in the true sense of the word; that it would wrong to entrust him with the power to determine who were pirates and who were not; and that he did not have the right to call upon the help of the Royal Navy. Brooke was, in the eyes of the commission, nothing more than a vassal of the Sultan of Brunei. See Runciman 1960: 116-117.

33 St John 1899; Baring Gould and Bampfylde 1909.

34 Brooke, in Keppel 1846: I, 59.

35 Ibid.

36 Brooke, in Mundy 1848: I, 9-10, 108-109. As Runciman has noted, 'Brooke was not attracted by the Chinese. They seemed to him ugly and ungainly, with complexions like corpses; but he wrote admiringly of their industry and their respect for education' (Runciman 1960: 49-50).

37 Brooke, in Keppel 1846: II, 144-145.

38 Ibid.: I, 211.

39 Ibid.: I, 332.

and regarded it as an example of native misrule. From the outset Brooke had intended his presence in Borneo to be a permanent one, for he saw himself as a just and liberal-minded European who possessed the means to radically transform the land and people of Borneo on his own terms. As he wrote:

> It is contended, and will always be contended, that the location of a just and liberal European people amidst uncivilised and demi-civilised races, is calculated to advance the best interests of those races by diffusion of knowledge, the impartial administration of justice, and the increase of commerce. […] But taking it in the most favourable point of view, granting that a government is all that it ought to be, let it be asked: have any people been so civilised, especially when the difference of colour a mark of inextinguishable distinction between the governing and the governed? Is it not necessary for states, as individuals, to form a distinctive character? The vassalage of the mass, like the dependence of a single mind, may form a yielding, pliant, even able character; but like wax it retains one impression only, to be succeeded by the next which is given. *The struggling of a nation, its dear-bought experiences, are absolutely necessary for the development of freedom*. Any other mode, is but reducing the bad state of a people to a worse, and whilst offering protection and food, depriving them of all stimulus which leads to the independence of communities. *Has any European nation been civilised by such a process? I know of none*.[40]

This drama of European enlightenment in the tropics required a cast of characters that included the negative constitutive Other. Here is where the natives of Borneo came to play their respective roles; and if the Chinese were 'corrupt and supple' while the Malays were 'cowardly and inept', it would be the Dayaks who were destined to play the part of the 'wild' and 'uncivilized' Other.

The framing of the Dayaks of Borneo as wild and uncivilized headhunters would come in the writings of those who supported Brooke in his 'war against piracy' and the eventual invasion and defeat of Brunei. Three men in particular stand out, and none of them were armchair strategists who weaved their narratives from the comfort of their studies back in England. All three were military (or more precisely, navy) men, and all three of them took active part in the security operations in Borneo. Here I wish to look at the writings of Admiral Sir Henry Keppel (1809-1904), Sir George Rodney Mundy (1805-1884) and Frank Marryat (1826-1855).

40 Brooke, in Mundy 1848: I, 66-67; emphasis mine.

Henry Keppel graduated from the Royal Naval College and in time he rose through the ranks and took part in the First and Second Opium Wars (1839-1842, 1856-1860). After the Borneo campaign he would be made admiral and commander of operations in China (in 1867). His account of the Borneo campaign would be published in 1846 bearing the title *The Expedition to Borneo of the HMS Dido for the Suppression of Piracy*. Sir George Mundy was also a Royal Navy man who played a role after the Belgian revolution (1830-1831) in the Dutch surrender of Antwerp (1832). As captain he was despatched to Southeast Asia and it was there that he served under the command of Rear-Admiral Thomas Cochrane. He would play his part in the attack on Brunei and the seizure of Labuan in 1846. In 1848 he would publish his account of the Borneo campaign, highlighting his role as commander of HMS *Iris* in a two-volume work entitled *Narrative of Events in Borneo and Celebes, Down to the Occupation of Labuan*. Frank Marryat was the third storyteller who contributed to the discursive construction of the Brooke legend. The son of the writer Captain Frederick Marryat RN (1792-1848), he was on board the HMS *Samarang* that was engaged off the coast of Sarawak in the 1840s. Unlike Keppel and Mundy, Marryat was also a competent and accomplished illustrator, and his illustrations would appear in the work that he published in 1848 entitled *Borneo and the Indian Archipelago*.

The three works produced by these men – Keppel's *Expedition to Borneo of the HMS Dido for the Suppression of Piracy*, Mundy's *Narrative of Events in Borneo and Celebes*, and Marryat's *Borneo and the Indian Archipelago* – were somewhat special in the sense that they were among the first studies of Borneo and Bornean society written in English, albeit by men who were not themselves scholars. Yet despite the fact that none of them were experts in the history of maritime Southeast Asia or the culture of the communities there, they did not hesitate to offer their observations on and about the land and its people, and in the course of doing so repeated the now-familiar trope of the Dayak as wild and ferocious adversary to be feared, and ultimately, defeated – while back in England the debate over the righteousness of the campaign against the pirates of Borneo was still being waged in earnest, and opponents of Brooke were critical of his policies and the manner in which the Dayaks were being misrepresented by the hawks who were calling for more direct intervention.

In terms of layout and structure, Keppel's account of the Borneo campaign is perhaps the most interesting for he weaves together his own account of the military campaign and James Brooke's account of Borneo and the necessity of direct military intervention. Presenting himself as a loyal officer of the Royal Navy, Keppel admitted to having scant knowledge of Borneo or the people he was meant to fight. (Even his maps of Borneo

proved to be unreliable.) As far as the character of the natives of Borneo was concerned, Keppel left it to Brooke to explain just how and why they needed to be subdued and civilized at gunpoint. Keppel conceded that as far as colonial wars went, the Borneo campaign was hardly a major military encounter, though he did opine that 'from the experience even of "a little war" an enlightened observer may deduce the most sound data on which to commence a mighty change'.[41]

The overlapping of the two stories – Keppel's and Brooke's – in Keppel's work allowed him to recount the voyage of the HMS *Dido* without having to account for *why* Britain was waging war against the Dayaks and Malays in the first place. (Brooke himself had admitted that the question remained as to what exactly piracy was, and whether one could fix a definition of it.[42]) Like Brooke, Keppel did not attempt a final definition of what piracy was, but he agreed that the war against piracy had to be undertaken nonetheless so 'that our commerce will be largely extended'[43] from Singapore across the entire Southeast Asian archipelago. Keppel concurred with Brooke's view that British maritime power should be extended across the region, and that 'if Labuan (island) were English, and if the sea were clear of pirates' there would be nothing to stop the British from consolidating throughout the archipelago.[44]

The jaundiced image of the Dayaks that we get in Keppel's work were mostly derived from the opinions of Brooke, whom he zealously quoted throughout his text.[45] Described as warlike and violent, the image of the Dayaks that emerges is a decidedly negative one, though at the same time it is interesting to note that at some points in his text Keppel does admit that the British-led forces were themselves more than capable of extreme violence and even looting. (Which were exactly the same charges that were levelled against the Dayaks.) Notwithstandig the obvious power differentials that were evident during the violent encounters with the various Dayak settlements that were raided then, Keppel believed that the ends justified the means, and was certain that Dayak resistance had to be met with an even

41 Keppel 1846: I, 192-193.

42 Keppel quoted Brooke thus: 'A question may arise as to what constitutes piracy; and whether, in our efforts to suppress it, we may not be interfering with the right of native states.' Later Brooke would go on to add that 'if we limit our construction of piracy, we shall, in most cases, be in want of sufficient evidence to convict; and the whole native trade of the archipelago will be left at the mercy of the pirates, much to the injury of our own commerce and our settlement in Singapore' (Brooke, in Keppel 1846: II, 153).

43 Keppel 1846: II, 155.

44 Ibid.: II, 159.

45 Brooke, in Keppel 1846: I, 171, 172, 173-175, 180, 183, 215, 216-217.

greater threat of force and violence, as he duly noted after the settlement of Rembas was razed to the ground: 'After we had destroyed everything, we received a flag of truce; and here ended, for the present, the warlike part of our expedition. The punishment we had inflicted was severe, but no more than the crime of their horrid piracies deserved.'[46]

Keppel's condemnation of the Dayaks for 'their horrid piracies' did not contribute to a better understanding of what piracy was, at least in the course of the military campaign. Though Keppel did not present the Dayaks as pirates in toto, he did condemn them for the lack of respect for private property and tendency to loot; but looting had by then become a norm in the conflict and Brooke's troops were just as inclined to do the same.[47] Though he strove to maintain the neat oppositional dichotomy between the 'good' colonialists and the 'bad' natives, Keppel was on occasion unable to maintain the neat boundary line between the two.

To expect a detailed study of the Dayaks, or nuance and complexity in the manner they were depicted, would be to ask too much from Keppel, for the man himself made no claims to knowledge about the Dayaks of Borneo, save for the fact that they had been designated as the enemy and as the enemy they had to be vanquished. The latter was Keppel's abiding concern and to that end he played his part as the commander of an imperial naval force, and it was his intention to inflict as much damage as he could upon the Dayak communities for 'the destruction of these places astonished the whole country beyond description'.[48] Keppel was a colonial soldier and he wrote like one as well. His narrative reads as a long justification of the use of violence against a native Other about to be colonized, for:

> [W]ithout a continued and determined series of operations of this sort, it is my conviction that even the most sanguinary and fatal onslaughts will achieve nothing beyond a present and temporary good. The impression on the native mind is not sufficiently lasting. Their old impulses and habits return with fresh force; they forget their heavy retribution. Till piracy be completely suppressed, there must be no relaxation: and well worth the perseverance is the end in view, the welfare of one of the richest and most improvable portions of the globe, and the incalculable extension of the blessings of Britain's prosperous commerce and humanising dominion.[49]

46 Keppel 1846: II, 67.
47 Ibid.: II, 69.
48 Ibid.: II, 67.
49 Ibid.: II, 231.

But Keppel never attempted a precise and final definition of what piracy was. All that mattered was that the Dayaks had been labelled as such, and that henceforth they, as a race, would be defined according to those terms in his writing – despite the fact that back in England Brooke's critics were accusing him of fictionalizing some of the goings-on in Sarawak and exaggerating the Dayak threat.

An equally two-dimensional portrayal of the Dayaks can be found in the work of Mundy, who shared Keppel's admiration for Brooke and disdain for the Borneans. For Mundy the Borneo campaign was a 'noble pilgrimage' that was prompted by only 'the best impulses of the human mind.' Long before we have grown acquainted with 'liberation campaigns' that entail bombing developing countries back to the Middle Ages Mundy was already casting the campaign in Borneo as a noble mission, aimed at liberating 'our dark and semi-barbarous brethren' from themselves.[50]

Mundy himself had little to say about the 'dark and semi-barbarous' people of Borneo. As in the case of Keppel, Mundy had likewise been tasked with the objective of rendering the waters off Borneo safe for Western commercial shipping, and British merchant vessels, in particular. The perceived threat was piracy, though, like Keppel, Mundy never attempted to define what piracy was and who the pirates were. Like Brooke he also believed that 'sufficient force' was necessary in order to 'chastise the pirates' and that 'by beneficial influence [...] correct the present wretched state of anarchy'.[51] Thus in his writing we see the workings of a neat oppositional dialectic very similar to that in Keppel's, where the native Other was cast as both the cause and the victim of his own native misrule and misconduct. The primary culprit to be blamed for all this was, in his view, the kingdom of Brunei, but the other goal was the capture of Labuan for 'by the occupation of this island, the English influence over the government of Borneo would be complete'.[52]

By the time that Brunei was attacked (on 8 July 1846), the oppositional dialectic between the good, liberal, modern Europeans and the bad, backward and violent native Other was set and sedimented. Following the death of Rajah Muda Hassim and Pangeran Budrudeen [Badarudin] – who were the Malay nobles most sympathetic to the British and their

50 Mundy described the campaign as 'a noble pilgrimage this! Prompted, not by the feelings of over-heated zeal, but by one of the best impulses of the human mind, the desire to relieve and disenchain millions of our oppressed and enslaved fellow-beings, our dark and semi-barbarous brethren of the Eastern Archipelago!' (Mundy 1848: I, 2-3).

51 Brooke, in Mundy 1848: II, 22.

52 Ibid.: II, 25.

interests – Brunei was seen as a hostile state, and the members of the court of Brunei were judged as 'impostors', 'cowards' and 'treacherous' to the man.[53] It is interesting to note that in both Mundy's and Keppel's works the oppositional Other was never uniform or homogenous, but a clear distinction was made between the 'treacherous' Bruneians and the 'wild' and 'savage' Dayaks. Though Mundy agrees with Keppel that the 'pirate menace' off the coast of Borneo was in fact made up of a motley crew of Suluks, Bajaos, Iranuns, men of Palawan as well as a sprinkling of Sea Dayaks, he too offers the reader very little information about the Dayaks and their history, culture and beliefs.

The illustrations that accompany Mundy's two-volume work are telling in the manner that they set the stage for the sanguinary encounter between British power and Dayak resistance: One of the first images we see is that of James Brooke's bungalow in Kuching, entitled *Mr. Brooke's House at Sarawak*; that places the Brooke residence in the middle of the image, flanked by neat rows of much smaller native houses kept in order. The depiction of British naval power unleashed comes later in the image entitled *Capture of the City of Brune* [*sic*], where British gunboats can be seen blasting their way into the port city of Brunei, and not a single Bruneian can be seen in plain sight. But the images of fighting with the Dayaks are the most arresting: In the plates entitled *Capture of Hadji Samman Fort by the Boats of the* Iris *and* Phlegethon, *Surprise of the Pirate Village of Kanowit* and, particularly, *Dyak* [*sic*] *Attack with Poisoned Arrows on the Boats of the* Iris *and* Phlegethon we see the first close-up images of the Dayaks, decked in loincloths, swords and blowpipes in hand and playing the part of the savage enemy of empire in full dress. (That blowpipes were hardly a match for guns and rockets was a point not communicated in the images or Mundy's text though.) Notwithstanding the fact that by all accounts the Dayaks were badly mauled in these bloody encounters, and that clearly superior weaponry was used in their suppression, the images we see in Mundy's work presents them as an enemy that is the threat to peace and order. Doubly disadvantaged by the way that they were depicted – as backward, primitive and unruly – the Dayaks were framed in the manner that made them the perfect juxtaposition to everything that Empire was supposed to embody: order, peace and progress.

Long before the British public were exposed to the images of Zulus and warring Mahdis made famous by the paintings of Alphonse de Neuville (1835-1885), Charles Edwin Fripp (1854-1906) and George William Joy (1844-1925),

53 Mundy 1848: II, 161, 169, 171, 174, 266.

the depictions of the Dayaks in Mundy's work were among the first images of Britain's 'semi-barbarous' enemies abroad. They reinforced the distinctions of colour/race, culture and religion that were the foundations of the neat oppositional dialectics of empire. Here was the native Other reduced to the level of two-dimensional portraits pregnant with meaning. The native Dayaks, clad in the barest essentials yet armed to the teeth, were presented as the belligerent opponents of commerce and development, bent on maintaining their 'anarchic' quarrelsome ways and unwilling to adapt to the realities of a new imperial order. Cast as a race apart, the invention of the 'Dayak race' had begun. But it was in the work of another Englishman that we find the most detailed, and ultimately arresting, portrait of the Dayaks that emerged from Britain's campaign in Borneo. For that I shall now turn to the work of Frank Marryat.

Arresting the Native Body: The Image of the Dayak in the Work of Frank Marryat

> In the figure of the 'nomad' they see embodied all the fugitive forces that European states since the early modern period have sought to contain and destroy. The nomadic sums up everything that has remained counter to the state, including knowledges that resist bureaucratic codification, people that defy national concentration, armies that evade defeat, entire societies that inhibit the formation of power centers.[54]
> – Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive*

Unlike Keppel and Mundy, whose stint in maritime Southeast Asia was a case of them blasting their way up the coast of Sarawak to Brunei, Frank Marryat's sojourn in Borneo was slightly more ponderous. Marryat had arrived in Sarawak three weeks after Keppel had left, and the ship he was on – the 28-gun sixth rater HMS *Samarang* – was then under the command of Commander (later Admiral, post-1872) Edward Belcher (1799-1877).[55] The *Samarang* was meant to move on to Brunei but she struck a rock at the start of the next leg of her journey, leaving her and her crew stranded in Kuching for a month. The *Samarang*'s misfortune proved to be a boon for Marryat, who was then given the opportunity to go ashore and meet with the Europeans and natives of Kuching. Here is where Marryat stood apart

54 Richards 1993: 19-20.
55 Marryat 1848: 61.

from Keppel and Mundy. While in Keppel's and Mundy's accounts of the communities of Borneo we encounter little distinction between the Dayaks, Ibans, Melanaus, Malays, Suluks, Bajao, Iranuns and men of Palawan – all of whom were summarily lumped together as different shades of the same brown malevolence – Marryat attempted a study that was slightly more precise and detailed.

As a result of his enforced stay in Sarawak, Marryat was able to collect information about the natives there, which was later put to use in his work that was published in 1848. His work came with 22 sepia-toned chromolithograph plates and many monochrome vignettes that were made by F.M. Del (based on Marryat's original sketches) and printed by the lithographic publishers, M. & N. Hanhart of London. What distinguishes Marryat's work from that of Keppel's and Mundy's is his reliance on images and his belief that images could convey more about the realities of social life abroad than mere narrative accounts. That he was certain of this is something that he himself noted in the introduction of his work, when he wrote:

> The engravings, which have appeared in too many of the Narratives of Journeys and Expeditions, give not only an imperfect, but even erroneous, idea of what they would describe. A hasty pencil sketch, from an unpractised hand, is made over to an artist to reduce to proportion; from him it passes to the hand of an engraver, and an interesting plate is produced by their joint labours. But, *in making this up*, the character and features of the individual are lost, or the scenery is composed of foliage not indigenous to the country, but introduced by the artist to make a good picture. *In describing people and countries hitherto unknown, no description by the pen will equal one correct drawing.*[56]

Marryat evidently believed that accurate data could be gained from correct representation. It was to that end that he sketched and later supervised the visual renderings of what he had seen in Borneo himself. Among the many images that are to be found in Marryat's work are several scenes of city and country life, from places like Bruni (Brunei), Kuching, Mount Kinabalu, as well as scenes of Hong Kong and the Philippines. Marryat's scenes were indeed beautiful, and the illustration of Mount Kinabalu was particularly well rendered and remains a popular image endlessly reproduced on postcards until today. But what really stands out among Marryat's coloured lithographs are the full-page figure studies of native types that include

56 Ibid.: v-vi; emphasis mine.

the 'Saghai Dyak', 'Loondoo Dyak', 'Serebis Dyak', 'Dusun', 'Malay Chief of Sooloo' and the 'Iranun Pirate'. All these figures are presented *singularly*, posed in a static manner like subjects in a photo studio, with no scenic background whatsoever and thus totally removed from any landscape or social context. (Unlike the figure-studies of the Javanese that appear in Raffles's *History of Java* (1817) that are set against their 'natural' countryside or urban backgrounds.)

Marryat's images present the Dayaks, Suluks and Malays as static ideal types, akin to how a solitary specimen is displayed in a museum case. True to his word, Marryat had paid close attention to the Dayaks he studied, and noted that the Dayaks were not, in fact, a singular 'race' but rather a collection of different subethnic groups in the manner that he labelled them. There is an extraordinary amount of detail in the rendering of their physiques, facial expressions, ornaments and dress, as well as their weaponry: The single-edged *mandau* in the hands of the Serebis Dayak is perhaps one of the first detailed images of the weapon to appear in any European lithograph, as are the spears in the hands of Loondoo, Saghai and Dusun Dayaks and the *kampilan* of the Iranun warrior. With no background scenery or props to distract the eye of the viewer, we are compelled to study the figures in detail and focus on their singularity. But in the manner in which these figures are arrayed one after another the unfamiliar reader/viewer might not be able to discern the very important differences between the different communities that come under the general heading of Dayak. We also see how Marryat's choice of subjects betrays his own concerns and interests as a military man: All the figure studies are male, and all of them are warrior types – as made evident by the weapons they carry.

Marryat may have approved the manner in which the Dayak warriors were rendered by F.M. Del, shorn of any unessential background details, but the question remains as to how and why he chose to focus almost exclusively on armed native warriors, all of whom were also male. (Marryat did include two smaller monochromatic woodcuts of Dayak women elsewhere in the text, though they are less detailed compared to his studies of Dayak warriors.[57]) Though it cannot be denied that his images were indeed among the most accurate that had ever been produced at the time – with an almost photographic quality to them that he aspired to – we are left wondering whether the entire

57 The black-and-white woodcut *Dyak* [*sic*] *Women in a Canoe* appears on page 74, while the image *Costumes of Dyak* [*sic*] *Women* appears on page 80. Perhaps in anticipation of the question as to why his figure studies were only of male figures, Marryat noted that the native women he met were quick to run away as soon as he attempted to sketch them.

population of Borneo was made up exclusively of Dayak men armed to the teeth. (Apart from the Dayak warriors, Marryat also included equally detailed images of an Iranun pirate and a Sulu chief, also well-armed.)

Marryat's focus on the *body* of the Dayak is also telling in many ways, and in the narrative of his stay in Sarawak he recounts his encounters with them and the information he collected about them. Upon closer reading it becomes clear that Marryat was very interested in the Dayak body, and what the Dayaks did to their bodies and to the bodies of others. Straight off the bat he introduces the Dayaks – all Dayaks, regardless of their tribal differences – as headhunters and collectors of human body parts. The very first image we see associated with the Dayaks is that of a severed human head, wrapped in rattan.[58] He wrote of how he witnessed Dayak children walking about wearing necklaces of human teeth around their necks,[59] and how the Dayaks were fond of collecting human heads,[60] for their 'customs are nearly those of the American Indians'[61] – another theme which he returns to again and again, as he noted what he saw as the similarities between Dayaks and Native Americans several times in his text.[62] Marryat inspected and recounted almost every single aspect of the Dayak body. He described the look and length of their hair, the colour of their skin, the appearance of Dayak earlobes and noted the elongated earlobes of the Dayaks of Gunong Tabor, and even provided an image of them.[63] As he focused his attention on the bodies of the Dayaks he noted that not only were they carrying weapons on their bodies, but *even their bodies had been weaponized*, owing to the Dayak practice of 'filing their teeth sharp, combined with the use of betel-nut, turning them quite black'.[64] As if his own account of the razor-sharp teeth of the Dayaks was not enough to scare his readers back home senseless, Marryat included a clear and detailed image of a Dayak mouth filled with razor-like teeth for his readers to chew on.[65]

That Marryat chose to compare the Dayaks of Borneo with Native Americans is also indicative of how he was framing them *as a race apart*, within the wider bioscape of empire's body politics. Rather than locating the Dayaks within the spectrum of the various communities and ethnic

58 Ibid.: 13.
59 Ibid.: 15.
60 Ibid.: 64.
61 Ibid.: 81.
62 Ibid.: 77, 81, 82, 83.
63 Ibid.: 135.
64 Ibid.: 79.
65 Ibid.: 79.

groups found in Borneo (such as the Malays, Melanaus, Iranuns, Suluks and people of Palawan), Marryat saw the Native American as the closest counterpart to the Dayaks he met and wrote about. Dayak beliefs for him were more similar to those of Native Americans than the beliefs of other communities, as were their rites and rituals of passage.[66] In combat the Dayaks even fought like Native Americans, he argued. When discussing the Dayaks' style of warfare he opined that 'the Dyaks [sic] are all very brave, and fight desperately, yelling during combat like the American Indians. The great object in their combats is to obtain as many heads of the party opposed as possible; and if they succeed in their surprise of the town or village, the heads of the women and children are equally carried off as trophies'.[67] Dayak women were also seen by him as similar to Native American women, and in their behaviour and appearance were compared to Native American squaws. Marryat noted that 'like the American squaws, they do all the drudgery, carry the water, and paddle the canoes'.[68]

Through these comparisons with the natives of America the Dayaks of Borneo were despatialised and relocated to an entirely different part of the world, but Marryat was not the first or only writer to do this. It is interesting to note that by the nineteenth century the Native American had become a familiar trope that stood for the Southeast Asian Other. Elsewhere I have looked at how the Native American loomed large in America's early encounters with Southeast Asia,[69] but this deliberate and repeated association of some Bornean 'races' with Native Americans was not the exclusive monopoly of American writers only. British writers like Isabella Bird (1831-1904) were likewise inclined to view the Malays of the Malay Peninsula in a similar light, when she wrote that 'civilised as they are, they do not leave any more impression on a country than a Red Indian would',[70] while being convinced that they were unable to adapt to the realities of modern Western colonialism and would eventually become extinct like the Native Americans, too, as a result of 'native auto-genocide'. As Patrick Brantlinger has argued, by then

66 On the subject of Dayak beliefs Marryat opined that 'the religious ideas of the Dyaks [sic] resemble those of North American Indians; they acknowledge a Supreme Being, or "Great Spirit"; they also have some conception of the hereafter. Many of the tribes imagine that the great mountain Keney Balloo (Kinabalu) is a place of punishment for guilty departed souls. They are very scrupulous regarding their cemeteries, paying the greatest respect to their ancestors. When a tribe quits one place to reside in another, they exhume the bones of their relations, and take them with them' (Marryat 1848: 77).

67 Marryat 1848: 81.

68 Marryat 1848: 82-83.

69 Noor 2018.

70 Bird 1883: 338-339.

there was a clear idea that some Asiatic 'races' were biologically distinct, and that they were racially-biologically predisposed towards savagery and violence, while unable to cope with the demands of modernity.[71]

In the same way that the Native American had by then been cast as the embodiment of everything that modern, white and Christian America was not,[72] and as a race that was bound to die out in the face of capital-driven modernization and progress,[73] so were the Dayaks in Marryat's work being framed as the oppositional Other to James Brooke's colonizing enterprise. This contrast becomes even clearer when we look at how Marryat would only present James Brooke as the epitome of goodness incarnate, whose 'kindness was beyond all bounds'[74] – though Marryat did not attempt to illustrate Brooke's boundless kindness, perhaps due to the fact that there was not enough paper to capture its infinitude.

Marryat's portrait of the Dayaks of Borneo ultimately presented them as a warlike race that was framed as the constitutive Other to white colonial masculinity, and many of the images of them and their way of life focused more on their weapons (such as the blowpipe[75]) and war boats.[76] But as Berkhofer has noted in his study of the historical evolution of the image of the Native American, such a constitutive Other is never located radically outside the discursive economy of those who have framed them as exotic and different in the first place, but rather is the tableau upon which white identity – along with its aspirations and anxieties – is framed and written. In the same way that the Native American was, as Berkhofer argues, really the 'white man's Indian' that was born out of white Christian America's desire to colonize the continent and render it knowable and familiar, so is Marryat's Dayak – as the eternally restless native Other – a reflection of Europe's colonial ambition and fear of native resistance. The fact that none of Marryat's images of Dayaks

71 The theory of native auto-genocide was based on the belief that the 'savage races' would eventually be destroyed by themselves thanks to essential flaws that were inherent in their culture and nature. This was a theory that gained greater currency by the end of the nineteenth century. As Brantlinger has argued, the theory became a respectable rationale to explain and justify further Western imperial domination and colonization of non-Western countries in Africa, Asia and the Americas. Such ideas were reproduced by many Orientalist writers of the time, and traces of the theory can be found in the writings of Western writers like Isabella Bird, Emily Innes (1843-1927), Florence Caddy (1837-1923), Anna Leonowens (1831-1915) and others who travelled and lived in the East as well. See Brantlinger 1995.

72 Berkhofer 1999.

73 Brantlinger 1995.

74 Marryat 1848: 18.

75 Ibid.: 80.

76 Ibid.: 64.

included depictions of Dayak agriculturalists or fishermen tells us more about where his attention – as a military man – was focused at than about the Dayaks themselves; and in the final analysis (detailed though his images were) we can see that the Dayaks we encounter in the writing and illustrations of Frank Marryat were his own; as he saw them, drew them, and as he wanted others to see them, too – as the warlike wild men of Borneo who, under the leadership of Malay and Arab pirate lords, were the opponents of empire.

Forever Framed, Forever Wild: The 'Dayak' as Floating Signifier

> From the Renaissance to the end of the eighteenth century, Europeans tended to fetishize the native peoples with whom they came into contact by viewing them simultaneously as monstrous forms of humanity and as quintessential objects of desire. Whence the alternative impulse to exterminate and to redeem native peoples. But even more basic in the European consciousness of this time was the tendency to fetishize the European type of humanity as the sole form that humanity in general could take.[77]
>
> – Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse*

Sophisticated and detailed though his studies of the Dayaks were, Marryat's attempt at studying them as a particular race endowed with traits of their own was in many ways typical of the times he lived in. In the decades to come – long after Sarawak had been colonized, Brunei pacified and the Dayaks subdued – others such as Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913) and Albert Smith Bickmore (1839-1914) would survey the Malay Archipelago in detail,[78] and from their research a scientific account of the land and peoples of Southeast Asia would emerge – though as I have noted elsewhere such men of science like Bickmore were more interested in the flora and fauna of the region than commenting on the harsh realities of native life under colonial rule.[79]

There was a striking similarity in the manner that Keppel, Mundy and Marryat came to Borneo and came to know the Dayaks: All three had been sent there to help Brooke deal with the so-called 'pirate menace' that Brooke claimed posed a serious threat to Britain's economic ambitions and maritime security; all three came to see and know the Dayaks through Brooke's account of them

77 White 1978: 194-195.
78 Wallace 1869; Bickmore 1869.
79 Noor 2018.

– and it has to be remembered that it was Brooke who was the first to attempt his own amateur study of racial difference when he went about analysing the physiology of the Dayaks, down to measuring the size of their skulls and the shape of their limbs. Brooke's focus on the body of the Dayaks – coming as it did at a time when theories of racial difference were slowly being dressed in the garb of pseudo-scientific theories of polygenesis – rendered them as a race that was distinct and different. Long before Keppel, Mundy and Marryat began writing about the Dayaks, and long before Marryat began capturing their images in his drawings, it was Brooke who had set the stage for their encounter, and the latter-day defenders of free trade and freedom of navigation were merely seeing the Dayaks of Borneo through the lens that Brooke had prepared for them.

All of this happened at a time when the more liberal voices of British political society were bemoaning the unfettered use of power and violence as British commercial-colonial interests were being pursued abroad. Again, it has to be remembered that Brooke's portrayal of the Dayaks of Sarawak was not universally accepted by all and sundry, and that back in London there were statesmen and groups such as the Aborigines' Protection Society who were vocal in their condemnation of Brooke's methods and objectives. Yet in the small company that he kept, which was made up of colonial capitalists and men in uniform, a consensus was reached and within this echo chamber the image of the warlike Dayak gained currency in the end. This was not the first time that the hawks of war had won the day. Decades earlier Britain's occupation of Java (1811-1816) was also opposed by critics of the British East India Company and the Royal Navy, such as the pamphleteer William Cobbett (1763-1835), who argued that the Java campaign was little more than an unjustifiable landgrab carried out ostensibly to keep the power of Napoleon in check, though Cobbett and his followers were ultimately unable to temper the company's ambitions abroad.[80]

Keppel, Mundy and Marryat were navy-military men, and their work was primarily military work. But owing to the fuzziness of the war on piracy and the fact that some of its proponents (Brooke, in particular) were then being accused of using excessive force against an enemy whose strength had been exaggerated in the eyes of some, there had to be some clarity. To that end the arrested image of the warlike Dayak was an idea that fitted nicely into the overall narrative of a Borneo that was overrun by headhunters and pirates. These men had been sent on a mission to defeat native polities and communities that resisted the might of the British Empire and theirs was a world that was divided into two neatly compartmentalized domains: between

80 See Cobbett 1811; Noor 2014.

the civilized realm of empire and the uncivilized lands of its adversaries and enemies. Though the 'campaign against piracy' that they fought was a bloody affair – and, at times, Keppel and Marryat did frankly admit that the precise definition of 'piracy' eluded them[81] – they were nonetheless certain that they were on the right side and that piracy was the problem of the Other.

The advocates of imperial expansion may have fumbled with their ad hoc definition of what piracy was, but they were clear in their consensus that the Dayaks and all things Dayak were warlike and hostile, akin to the then popular image of the Native American who stood at the boundary between ever-expanding white colonial America and the native land they were colonizing, who was also cast as the belligerent opponent to the American dream. Like the Native American whose languages, knowledges and beliefs were deemed unmodern and primitive, the Dayak that appears in the works of Brooke, Keppel, Mundy and Marryat have little to offer except exotic weapons, severed heads and razor-sharp teeth. And like the Native Americans whose resistance to white settler colonialism was more often than not re-presented as instances of native barbarism, so were the instances of resistance on the part of the Dayaks re-presented as examples of primordial savagery at work. The arrested image of the Dayak as wild headhunter may have been a fictional Orientalist trope but it was an instrumental fiction that was powerful: Powerful enough to mobilize the forces of Brooke and the Royal Navy.

In the course of this military campaign Keppel, Mundy and Marryat also fashioned narrative accounts of what they did, what they saw and the people they encountered and blew to smithereens; and they wrote at a time when pseudo-scientific theories of racial difference were deemed respectable on both sides of the Atlantic. British East India Company men like John Crawfurd (1783-1868) had already divided the archipelago into five different zones along racial-biological lines, and introduced distinctions between the 'higher' semi-civilized natives of Southeast Asia and the 'lower' uncivilized

81 Keppel (1846) had admitted that he was somewhat hazy over the definition of piracy though that did not prevent him from obeying his orders. In Marryat's work, he recounts an encounter with the Dutch off Gilolo (Jailolo, Halmahera, Maluku), where the Dutch had complained about British aggression and the manner that British ships had fired upon Dutch *prahus* that were on the lookout for pirates. The encounter between the British and Dutch ships off Gilolo incensed the latter, for the British had 'wantonly fired a Congreve rocket' at one of their boats, that their 'conduct in this instance [was] much more like that of a pirate' as far as the angry Dutch were concerned (Marryat 1848: 52-53). Marryat also noted that the Dutch had complained about the excessive use of force by the British, who 'had burned the village of the people of Gillolo [Gilolo] [...] without the least aggression on their part' (Marryat 1848: 53).

natives of the region, all of whom were placed beneath the Europeans who were ranked higher than everyone else as they were deemed by Crawfurd to be the most civilized of all. In America proponents of scientific racism, such as Samuel A. Cartwright (1793-1863), Samuel George Morton (1799-1851) and Josiah C. Nott (1804-1873), had led the way in the American School of Ethnography, which likewise placed Native Americans and black African slaves well below their white colonists and masters, lending scientific support and moral justification to the political economy of slavery in the antebellum South.[82] None of these men saw anything morally wrong with the theories their forwarded, and none of them could view Asians and Africans in any other way save as different *races* that were inferior and in need of white tutelage and stewardship.

Like the Native American who was seen as the obstacle to progress and at the same time the one who needed to be redeemed by it, the Dayak was likewise placed on two separate registers at once and became an important feature of the discourse of the war on piracy. On the one hand, the Dayaks were cast as backward and unable to develop on their own (as in the manner that Raffles had cast the Javanese as 'degenerate' and trapped in the past). On the other hand, the eradication of lawlessness and native anarchy was also intended (or so it was claimed) to liberate the natives of Borneo from themselves and their errant ways, paving the way for eventual progress. Contradictory though these modes of framing may have been, they were part and parcel of the imperial enterprise as Hall has argued, for:

> [l]iberal imperialism thrives on these contradictions. There was, in the one register, the endless invocation of the civilizing mission and of the duty to advance the empire at a moderate, gentlemanly pace towards its own transcendent abolition. And in a separate register the colonial masters repeated their conviction that it was their duty to administer unbridled authority wherever they deemed it necessary. Seemingly opposites, over time each voice combined with and came to exist inside the other.[83]

Though valorized as a peace-keeping effort intended to pacify the waters of Southeast Asia for the sake of free trade, Britain's war on piracy was – at the ground level – ultimately a war of conquest (that led to the loss of Sarawak to Brooke and Labuan to Britain) and also a race war. And in this race war each race had its scripted role to play.

82 Fredrickson 1972; Feagin 2006; Guyatt 2016.

83 Hall 2017: 180.

As Hirschman has noted, race and racial difference were ideas that were invented and introduced to Southeast Asia during the colonial period, and these ideas would remain in circulation well into the twentieth century, right up to the end of empire.[84] As late as the 1920s physical anthropologists like D.J.H. Nyèssen would still be trying to differentiate between the 'races' of Java and beyond, and such hierarchies of racial difference would remain among the most enduring legacies of the colonial encounter.[85] Though postcolonial historians of empire like Tarling have attempted to document the long process of imperial expansion and colony building across the region,[86] they have tended to focus more on the political economy of colony building while sometimes overlooking the deep-rooted racial biases held by the colonial administrators and empire-builders that guided that process, and how colonial policies were often shaped by prejudiced attitudes towards colonized peoples who were seen as weak and unmanly,[87] cursed by their biological deficiency[88] or ungrateful to their colonial masters – resistance to whom has been explained in the works of Scott.[89]

The Long Shadow of the Nineteenth Century: Semantic Arrest and the Image of the Dayak, Then and Now

Reminds you of the Dayaks, doesn't it? Cold blooded
carnage like this, right up their alley.
– From the film *Immortel Ad Vitam* (2004), dir. Enki Bilal

The image and idea of the headhunting Dayak as the embodiment of violence would persist for decades to come, up to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, along with a host of other essentialized native tropes such as the 'piratical' Malay and the 'lazy' Javanese.[90] Long after the guns of the colonial gunboats had fallen silent, the Dayak would linger in the popular imaginary as the irredeemably violent Other, a force of nature that cannot be controlled. In the science fiction film *Immortel Ad Vitam* (2004), written and directed

84 Hirschman 1986.
85 Nyèssen 1929.
86 Tarling 1969.
87 Sinha 1995.
88 Winzeler 1990.
89 Scott 1976, 1985.
90 See, for instance, the popular novels by G.A. Henty, such as *Among Malay Pirates: A Tale of Adventure and Peril* (1899), and the posthumously published, *In the Hands of the Malays* (1905), etc.

by the contemporary graphic novelist Enki Bilal (b. 1951), we encounter a dystopian future world run by the global corporation Eugenics, which has radically altered the state of the human body and ushered in the era of the cyborg. Fearful of all forms of resistance to its ambition for progress, Eugenics declares war against those who oppose its hegemony. Among the weapons that the Eugenics corporation has at its disposal is a biologically engineered synthetic monster, blood-red in colour and with a head that resembles that of a Hammerhead shark. This unstoppable killing machine is called 'the Dayak' – after the viewers are told that 'the Dayaks are extinct' and that 'they were all exterminated, after the riots 30 years ago'. That the signifier 'Dayak' was the name of choice for Eugenics's bioengineered weapon in Bilal's futuristic story says something about how the signifier has come to be associated with carnage over time. It would seem that even in the worst imaginable future the Dayak lives on, to terrorize what is left of humanity.

What I have tried to argue in this chapter is that the war on piracy that was fought off the northern coast of Borneo and the Sulu Sea – that was rationalized and justified in the name of freedom of navigation and the protection of free trade – ultimately became a race war due to the manner in which it was presented by its advocates. Men like Brooke (and his supporters like Keppel, Mundy and Marryat) maintained that British (and other European) shipping would never be safe unless and until the pirate menace was dealt with decisively, and in the course of this argument the threat against Western commercial shipping was invariably presented as a Southeast Asian one, made up of piratical elements among the Malay, Arab, Suluk, Bajao and Iranun communities. The Dayaks of Borneo were roped into this war not as pirates but as a warlike and backward people who could easily be manipulated by other Asiatics (notably Malays and Arabs) to do their bidding and to lend their support in the attacks against Westerners. The narrative surrounding the war on piracy neglected to mention the fact that Europeans then were just as inclined to attack and pillage each other's vessels (particularly during the Revolutionary Wars and the Napoleonic War of Europe) and that many Southeast Asian kingdoms were equally opposed to piracy, too. In time the image-idea of the warlike headhunting Dayak would stick, and it was the notion that they were a wild, untamed people (sometimes compared to Native Americans by men like Marryat) that justified the use of violence in the pacification campaign that Brooke waged as he carved up his own personal kingdom in Sarawak – leading to instances of attacks on Dayak settlements, the burning of their villages and the looting of their property. All of this became part of the civilizing-colonizing mission to bring the Dayaks under the tutelage of white Europeans who were then

regarded as superior in morals and intelligence, and who would be able to turn the Dayak away from the path of violence towards a productive law-abiding life instead. But the logic of this argument lay in the premise that the Dayak was a savage in the first place, and this would ultimately be the lasting legacy of Brooke's campaign in Borneo.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Dayaks were never a singular homogenous race that could be essentialised in a reductive manner, we should not be surprised if the image of the Dayak – as a wild man of violence – popped up in the artist Harold Millar's illustrations for Frank Swettenham's account of the Perak uprising that we discussed at the beginning of this chapter, for the communities of Southeast Asia were being misrepresented quite often by then. (Soon after the publication of Swettenham's account that included Millar's images of the Malay-as-Dayak the American press would be calling for intervention in the Philippines and in American newspapers and magazines the Filipino would be depicted as black, with curly hair and thick lips, akin to caricatures of African American slaves that had been in circulation for decades.) That Millar chose to depict the 'wild Malays' from the interior of the peninsula in the form of *mandau*-wielding Dayaks may not have been entirely coincidental for the image of the violent Dayak was already in common circulation. To suggest that Millar had no idea of what Malays looked like would be far-fetched, for the Malay Peninsula was known to the British; and, as I have argued elsewhere,[91] by the end of the nineteenth century Europeans had come to know Southeast Asia very well, considering the fact that vast swathes of the region had come under British, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and later American, rule. The spread of Western colonial power across Southeast Asia did not, however, alter Western perceptions of Southeast Asians or lead to a clearer and more balanced appreciation of the region's different cultures and ethnicities. Instead, it led to the further repetition of age-old tropes that were recycled again and again, reproduced ad infinitum well into the twentieth century in the form of postcards, lithographs, popular fiction and, later, cinematography – as in the case of the film *Farewell to the King* (1989), where the American hero is seen as divine by the Dayaks thanks to his white skin and blue eyes.[92]

91 Noor 2016.

92 The film *Farewell to the King* (dir. John Milius, 1989) based on the novel by Pierre Schoendoerffer and starring Nick Nolte is an example of how the Dayak was instrumentalized in the retelling of the White Man's Burden narrative. Set during the Second World War, the central character is that of the American deserter Learoyd, who is played by Nolte. The hero deserts his comrades only to find himself in the heart of Borneo, where he is seen as a divine figure by

We still live in the long shadow of the nineteenth century and until today the image of the Dayak – as headhunter and embodiment of the exotic – lives on in the forms of popular culture and mass tourism that has grown to industrial proportions in postcolonial Southeast Asia. Straddling the border between two countries, the Dayaks of Borneo are today citizens of both Indonesia and Malaysia, and in both countries they continue to provide the pulling power to lure foreign tourists who venture to the region in search of unique experiences that are different from their own back home. In some instances the Dayaks have been cast as nature's innocents, removed from the cares of modernity.[93] In other cases they have been defined as the final repositories of an age that has passed, a trace of the authentic pre-modern. Yet in other instances the trope of the warring Dayak has been put to use, as in the case of the scores of T-shirts, postcards and posters that welcome tourists to 'the land of the headhunters'. But as Becker has argued, all of this has contributed mainly to the commodification of Dayak culture in the present, where the tourist industry – including its hipster variants such as 'ecotourism' and 'ethical tourism' – have merely capitalized on tropes and stereotypes from the colonial era, at times in a totally unreflective manner.[94] Though the proponents of tourism have argued time and again that such forms of tourism benefit both the Dayaks and the tourists as well, and that the commodification of Dayak culture has helped to expose the world to Dayak history and identity, Becker maintains that those economic benefits mean that tourist sites are often tailored to fulfil the expectations of the Western tourist and that in turn requires the repeated staged performance of native identity as something distinct and different from the Occidental norm, often couched in terms of the exotic or primitive.

In the same way that the war on piracy was presented as a necessary and justifiable campaign to render the region safe for all while neglecting to highlight the fact that it was also a land-grabbing race war, the tourism industry today remains unable or unwilling to note that in most cases the tourist dollar has a colour to it as well; and that by foregrounding the so-called exotic elements of native cultures what is being reinforced is the oppositional dialectic between a modern, civilized West and an unmodern East. Having forked over their cash with the expectation to see something

the Dayaks due to the colour of his blue eyes. Acting out the role of the white saviour, the hero introduces order and equality among the Dayaks and, Tarzan-like, becomes their ruler.

93 For a reiteration of the trope of the 'humble' and 'simple' Dayaks, see, for instance, 'Sunshine' 2012.

94 Becker 2015.

exotic, the native Other can only oblige and reciprocate, thereby reiterating the performance of the exotic and authentic for the sake of Facebookable or Instagramable entertainment. As in the past, the Dayaks of Borneo are seen and cast as a race apart, and in so doing are reduced as a result of semantic arrest. Despite all our talk of political correctness and sensitivity to diversity and difference, living in the twenty-first century does not mean that we have walked out of the shadow of the nineteenth; and the legacy of colonial epistemic violence continues still.

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3 Piratical Headhunters *yang semacam Melayu dan Cina*

Creating the Abject Native Other during the Mat Salleh Rebellion (1894-1905)

Yvonne Tan

Abstract
The chapter looks at how the Mat Salleh Rebellion, led by a *datu* (chief) with ties to the Sulu Sultanate, challenged the British North Borneo Company and the manner in which indigenous resistance was conceptualized. Despite the involvement of diverse communities in the rebellion, there was a clear demarcation of those who were 'in the likeness of a Malay' or 'in the likeness of a Chinese', coastal or inland. Mat Salleh's influence, which was initially linked to outlawed Bajaos and Suluks, quickly grew and rendered such demarcations irrelevant. Among those who joined him were 'peace-loving' Dusuns and the 'martial races' that made up the Company's constabulary – Dayaks fleeing the 'war on piracy' in Sarawak, Sikhs and Pathans. Despite the fallibility of the Company's racial logic, it continued to frame the rebellion in racial terms, thereby shaping their response.

Keywords: Mat Salleh Rebellion, British North Borneo Company, race, Sulu, Bajau

Mat Salleh[1] (d. 1900) first came to the attention of the North Borneo Chartered Company (1881-1946) in 1894 when he was associated with 'Sulu murderers' and accused of killing two Dayak traders at Sugut River. No

1 'Mat Salleh' is a common term in Malaysia often used to refer to Caucasians; occasionally, it can have a derogatory implication while at other times it can be neutral. The origins of this term and how it became popularized is uncertain, with the *New Straits Times* speculating it was a phonetic mispronunciation of 'mad sailors' (See Tan 2009), while it is more likely the term

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serious action was taken against him at the time.[2] But a year later, his rebellion against Company rule began in earnest when he, along with several chiefs and armed men, arrived at Sandakan to protest against the new taxation laws. The Company responded by burning and pillaging his village. This prompted Mat Salleh to gather followers from other villages, who were also unhappy with the new taxes. The rebellion eventually grew to become a wider struggle lasting almost a decade, and it would outlive the man who lent his name to the uprisings which continued for another five years after his passing.

The Mat Salleh Rebellion of 1894-1905 witnessed the mobilization of different peoples from the major communities of North Borneo (present-day Sabah, Malaysia). These included the Suluks, Bajaos, Iranuns, Dayaks, Dusuns, Sikhs and Pathans. But it was not a rebellion that was divided by ethnicity, for members of all these communities were on both sides of the conflict. Mat Salleh's success in building a broad multi-ethnic support base has been attributed to his mixed Suluk-Bajao ancestry and his wife's ties to the ruling family of the Sulu Sultanate. The uprising would evolve into a multifaceted clash which foregrounded an indigenous struggle for self-determination against the North Borneo Company's rule over native land.

The North Borneo Chartered Company first acquired the territory dubbed 'North Borneo' in 1881. This Company-ruled territory was administered as a commercial monopoly until the territory was transferred to the Colonial Office in 1946 as the Crown Colony of North Borneo (from 1946 to 1963). It would ultimately become the state of Sabah after it joined the Federation of Malaysia on 16 September 1963. There are many questions that can be raised regarding the use of violence perpetrated during the era of Company rule. So too regarding the ways the Company's administration viewed and framed 'native violence' and resistance to its rule. This chapter will focus mainly on how the rejection of exploitative colonial practices by the people of North Borneo would come to shape colonial perceptions that have been reified into popular imagination in ways which continue to resonate to this day. With most of the records of the rebellion written by officers of the North Borneo Company, the challenge of recounting the history and memory of the subaltern remains.

came from the historical figure, Mat Salleh, who led the longest resistance against the North Borneo Chartered Company between 1894 and Salleh's death in 1900.

2 Tarling 1985: 48.

Chartering the North Borneo Chartered Company

Up to the nineteenth century, native governance in North Borneo did not assume the familiar pattern of ruler-centric *kerajaan* politics as in the case of the Malay kingdoms of Peninsular Malaya or the kingdoms of Java. Unlike the ruler-based polities found elsewhere in the archipelago, the social structures of the expanding Brunei and Sulu Sultanates on the west and east coasts of North Borneo, respectively, were loosely adopted: notably the *jajahan* (district) system and *datu* (chieftainship) system. The people's sense of belonging remained tied to their district, village or tribe.[3] In theory, the kingdom of Brunei practiced a monarchical system, where the sultan was God's representative on earth. But, in reality, authority was often balanced between the ruler, his four ministers of state (*wazir*), the other aristocrats, including the second order of state officials (*ceteria*) and the third order of religious leaders (*menteri*). In addition, village heads are not centrally appointed but often locally chosen. There was a demarcation between the state where the sultan was based (*negeri*) and its extended dependencies (*jajahan sungai*, [river districts]). Dependencies were territorially recognized by the river on which the village was located.[4]

Meanwhile, in the Sulu Sultanate power was distributed between the sultan and the *Ruma Bichara*, a council comprising *datus*, *panglimas* and *imams*, who were guided by customary law (*adat*) and religious law. The sultan and *datus* were counterparts to one another, although at opposite ends of the political spectrum. The latter possessed social capital and prestige, but they did not necessarily hold power.[5] The *datus* were independent of one another and regularly challenged incumbent sultans as well as taking part in their election, forming a looser decentralized dominion along the east coast of Borneo.[6] Both Mat Salleh and Baron von Overbeck (1830-1894) were *datus*.

These were the pre-existing power structures that the North Borneo Chartered Company had to deal with from its inception.[7] The Company was established by Baron von Overbeck, with the financial backing of Alfred Dent (1844-1927) and his brother, Edward Dent. In 1877, the latter had negotiated the purchase of the 1860s concessions of the American Trading Company

3 Singh 2011: 63-71.
4 Ibid.; Mail and Asbol 2008: 84.
5 Warren 2007: xliv-xlvi.
6 Majul 1965: 27, 34.
7 See British North Borneo Company Charter 1878.

from Brunei's ruler, Sultan Abdul Mumin (r. 1852-1885) and his chief minister, the Pangeran Temenggong.[8] The Austrian consul-general together with the heads of Dent & Co. – one of the wealthiest British trading companies in Shanghai at the time – also enjoyed the support of William Hood Treacher (1849-1919), then acting governor of the British Crown Colony of Labuan, who would later become the first governor of North Borneo (1881-1887). Treacher helped negotiate a sum of $12,000 per annum for the sultan and $3,000 for his chief minister in exchange for the territories and the bestowal of the title of 'Maharajah of Sabah, Gaya and Sandakan' on Overbeck in the hope of curtailing Sarawak's expansion. According to Treacher, the Company was bestowed 'power of life and death over the inhabitants, with all the absolute rights of property vested in the Sultan over the soil and the right to dispose of the same, as well the productions of the country'.[9] Overbeck then sailed to Sulu, as the Sultan of Sulu was also asserting a claim over parts of North Borneo. There he met with Sultan Muhammad Jamal ul-A'lam (r. 1862-1881), who granted Overbeck the title of 'Datu Bendahara and Raja of Sandakan' in exchange for a payment of $5,000 per annum.[10]

The North Borneo Company's period of administration began in 1878 with the arrival of its two first Residents – William Burgess Pryer (1843-1899) who was assigned to Sandakan, and William Pretyman, who served as Resident of Tempasuk on the Tempasuk River (in office 1878-1879). There was a third Company officer appointed as Assistant Resident of Papar, H.L. Leceister. Their joint brief was to develop the Company's commercial interests.[11] The organization of the colony of North Borneo was guided by the logic of a commercial enterprise aimed at maximizing profits while at the same time domesticating the colony and rendering it safe for further Western capital investment. Pryer, a former amateur boxing champion, intrepid explorer and lepidopterist, hailed by some as the 'founder' of Sandakan, was widely regarded as the most successful of the three Company pioneers. He stated that 'the want of people on the east coast is due to the ravages, in old days, of pirates by sea and head hunters by land'.[12] Walter H. Medhurst (1822-1885), former British consul-general on the China Coast and Commissioner of Chinese Immigration, who took part in the founding of the Company and the organization of its coolie trade, echoed Pryer's line

8 CO874/12, CO874/17-20, Doolittle 2003: 99-100.
9 Treacher 1890: 50.
10 CO874/23; Tarling 1985: 47.
11 Black 1970: 3.
12 Pryer 1883: 230.

of argument when he wrote in 1885 about the need to 'save the people of Borneo from themselves':

> There can be no doubt that the natives of all tribes have now begun to appreciate fully the advantages attending a life of peace and security at home, combined with a lucrative trade abroad, as compared with the fitful and hazardous existence they once led as pirates and headhunters, with the war-cry of tribal dispute perpetually ringing in their ears.[13]

Pryer, Treacher, Medhurst, and a decade later (1910-1911), the young British anthropologist, Ivor H.N. Evans (1886-1957), as well as other Company officials held the view that what the Company was doing would benefit the colonized peoples of North Borneo as 'this Christian, peace-loving, peace-making, commercial empire [developed] itself from strength to strength'.[14] From the outset this colonial-capitalist venture was cast as a civilizing mission. But, as Said has argued, such missionary enterprises are founded on the assumption of hierarchies of race, sex and nationalities which frame the non-Western Other in a permanently inferior status.[15] Embedded in the narrative of the civilizing mission was the belief that the native Other was tainted by inferiority, and thus could never be fully elevated to the same status as the civilizing colonizer. Operating under the rationale that entire groups of people can only act in certain predictable ways, the search for a people's 'original sin' was manifested in the form of travelogues, and anatomical and anthropological studies focused on 'understanding' a particular race. In the case of North Borneo, this was located in the early identification of some of its communities as being 'inherently' prone to piracy and headhunting.

Overview of the Mat Salleh Rebellion

The Company's propensity to label entire ethnic groups as distinct biological types, each with their own inherent characteristics, was applied to Mat Salleh and his supporters. From 1894, the Suluk-Bajao *datu* was linked to the murder of Dyak traders and it was known that he did not approve of the Company's newly built customs station in his home island of Pulau Jambongan. He quickly

13 Medhurst 1885: 20.
14 Ibid.: 33.
15 Said 1994: 120.

made a name for himself as a leader of the Suluks, as the customs stations were unpopular among the other members of the community as well. In 1894, some Suluk chiefs attacked the station near Sugut (in May 1894), and shortly after Mat Salleh attacked the station at Pulau Jambongan (in June 1895).[16]

The rebellion began in earnest on 17 August 1895 when Mat Salleh and several other Suluk chiefs visited Buli Sim Sim, Sandakan. They protested the new taxes introduced by the Company, including the rice tax and poll tax, the licensing of boats, and the customs stations built on Pulau Jambongan. They also resented the presence of the customs officer, Haji Salahudin, who had been stationed there. After negotiations with the Company treasurer-general Alexander Cook had failed, they sailed away on the third day. The Company's response to this initial act of protest was to attack and burn Mat Salleh's village at Pulau Jambongan. This took place on 20 August 1895, and Mat Salleh, his family and men were forced to flee. They then took to a roving life as fugitives and began to organize local resistance.

Mat Salleh headed to Labuk to build a force of his own and constructed a fort at Lingkabau. Given that many Dumpas Dusuns – who had also refused to pay the poll tax – had joined him, the Company referred to the affair as 'The Dumpas Rebellion'. Tensions ran high when the Company sent in the Dayak police. Mat Salleh and his Dumpas followers exchanged fire with the Company constabulary force at the same time attacking the office of the local Lingkabau district officer, J.E.G. Wheatley, Company magistrate of Sugut and Labuk. Further expeditions were sent to arrest the rebels and regain control of the area. Those caught were later tried in the sessions court. Mat Salleh and his men now went on the offensive: on 9 July 1897 they launched attacks on the Company's trading ports in Gaya and Ambong, and began to construct a fortified position at nearby Inanam, moving on later to Ranau. In response the Company launched the Ranau expedition, laying siege to Mat Salleh's fort on 10 December 1897 and eventually taking it by storm. They failed, however, to capture Mat Salleh and his men, who made good their escape.

William Clark Cowie (1849-1910), the director general of the North Borneo Company (1897-1909), then newly arrived from London, hoped to use his close ties with the Sultan of Sulu, Jamalul-Kiram II (r. 1894-1936), to negotiate with Mat Salleh and his followers. Eventually, on 19 April 1898, the two men met at Kampung Palatan, engaging in a first round of negotiations which culminated in the Company and the Bajao-Suluk *datu* signing the Palatan Peace Pact on 22 April 1898. Under the terms of this pact, Mat Salleh and his men were pardoned, but they were henceforth only allowed to live in a restricted area in

16 Black 1983: 141-142.

Tambunan. The pact, however, unravelled soon afterwards when an internal conflict erupted between the Dusuns of Tegas and Tiawan. In October 1898, this prompted the Company to build another government station on their territory, a move which angered Mat Salleh. Fourteen months later, on the auspicious first day of the new century – 1 January 1900 – all-out war with the Company began. But the Company reacted swiftly: by 11 January their armed Dayak police had secured most of the Tegas villages, and soon thereafter destroyed the fort belonging to Mat Salleh's key lieutenant (23 January). On 31 January 1900, Mat Salleh himself was hunted down and killed with a bullet to the head. Having suffered such significant losses, what remained of Mat Salleh's once extensive force raided Kudat for weapons (26 April). But it proved a pyrrhic victory – in the attack most of Mat Salleh's high-ranking commanders were killed. The conflict smouldered on for another five years, and only in 1905 would Mat Salleh's last remaining followers surrender.

The Disjunctive Proposition: Pirates yang Semacam Melayu

In terms of his identity and ancestry Mat Salleh was both Bajao and Suluk. Having made a name for himself as the leader of a rebellion against the North Borneo Company, he would be cast as an archetype of the Bajao-Suluk pirate. Despite the fact that he had never waged war at sea, Mat Salleh would be characterized as a 'restless adventurer' and a 'proud, fiery and commanding personality with all the colourful and warlike characteristics of his ancestors as well as their dislike of authority. His influence, if not his authority, already extended downstream."[17] Throughout their eleven-year-long rebellion (1894-1905), Mat Salleh and his supporters would be identified as 'rebels', 'bandits',[18] 'outlaws' of 'notorious criminality',[19] 'raiders', 'murderers"[20] and 'pirates'.[21]

17 FO12/106, 14/12/1897, p. 18; Tregonning 1956: 21.

18 *British North Borneo Herald* (henceforth: BNBH), 1/3/1898, p. 73.

19 CO874/259, 27/10/1897, Raffles Flint to Secretary of Sandakan, p. 429.

20 CO874/256, 16-26/8/1895, Extracts from Treasurer General's Diary on Mat Sallay, p. 822; FO12/109, 7/5/1900, Clifford to Arthur Keyser, His Britannic Majesty (henceforth: HBM)'s Consul for Labuan, p. 28; 9/5/1900, Report by R.M. Little for HBM's Consul for Borneo, p. 31. Robert McEwen Little (b. Singapore, 16 October 1860) first joined the Company as a Treasury Clerk in 1883, working up the ranks to become Resident for West Coast in 1892, then Resident and Judge for Labuan in 1898 before becoming Deputy Governor of Labuan for a short period in the same year. His last position was Resident of Province Alcock until his early death in 1905.

21 RM 10, Papers of Henry Nicolas Ridley, *The Book of Travels* (*or Minute Book*), *1887-1912*. Royal Botanic Library Archives, Kew: 336-350, containing a section on 'The True Story of the Mat Salleh Rebellion' in Pakri and Graf 2012: 19-21.

The Company officials, Pryer and Medhurst, had identified two types of native transgressors – pirates and headhunters – as the 'social ills' which, in their view, had 'plagued' North Borneo prior to colonial intervention. They characterized the Bajaos as 'a race of sea-gypsies – pirates turned fishermen, under British guidance'.[22] Pryer attributed the problem of piracy to the Bajaos and in particular to their 'Balignini' subdivision. Claiming that he himself was 'regarded by them [Balignini] as a chief of the Sandakan division of Bajaos',[23] Pryer boasted in his writings that it was thanks to his successful management of Bajao affairs, in particular his suppression of their innate piratical vice, that he had succeeded in subduing them. He also noted that the last pirate attack had taken place along the coastal area under his control as long ago as 1879 (he was writing in 1887). The framing of the Bajaos (or 'Sea Gypsies') as the savage native Other is evident in his writings, can be clearly seen in this passage:

> The Bajaws [Bajaos] are a stronger and rougher race, broad-shouldered and muscular, of a far lower type, hardly knowing wrong from right, timid almost as wild animals, but capable of a dog-like fidelity to those in whom they have gained confidence. […] It is dangerous for trading boats to go into some parts where the Bajaws [Bajaos] form the bulk of the population. […] They are in a great measure oppressed by the Sulus, whose chiefs 'requisition' them for anything they want that the Bajaws [Bajaos] can make or collect, while Sulu traders establish themselves near every community, and carry on a barter business at extraordinary rates of profit.[24]

Pryer's comparison of the Bajaos to 'wild animals' endowed with 'dog-like fidelity' suggests not only to their unpredictability but to their intrinsic inability to think for themselves. Depicting the Bajaos as a 'primitive race' (though one that could still be tamed, trained and 'civilized'), Pryer also placed them in a position of inferiority to other Asiatic races – such as the Suluks – and argued that their 'malevolent behaviour' was the result of bad tutelage and the oppression meted out to them by other Asiatic communities. In his view, they would be better off under European rule and the guidance of the Company, which would effectively maintain 'the power of everyone, down to the lowest Bajaw [Bajao], to have the right of personal audience with

22 BNBH, 16/9/1903, p. 230.
23 Pryer 1887: 231.
24 Pryer 1883: 91.

the representative of Government. This is of course altogether at variance with our Western notions'.[25]

Ivor H.N. Evans, the young British anthropologist who worked for the North Borneo Company from 1910 to 1911, further studied Bajao activities, which highlighted and confirmed their 'primitive ways'. His account was largely informed by their involvement in the Mat Salleh Rebellion. He referred to their proclivity for 'piracy, raiding and burning Chinese shops, which is the Bajao's idea of the highest kind of pleasure, gambling, buffalo or pony-racing, cattle-thieving, cock-fighting or hunting'.[26] Evans believed the Bajaos to be of Malay origin from Johor, but blended with 'every racial type to be found in South Eastern Asia and Oceania'. In conclusion, he called them the 'chief of the former Malay pirates'.[27]

Before Evans, Owen Rutter (1889-1944), prolific historian (biographer of William Bligh of 'mutiny on the *Bounty*' fame), novelist and travel writer, who served in the North Borneo civil service from 1910 to 1915, expanded on this legend of the Bajaos' origins from the Malay Peninsula, while retelling the story of how the rulers of Brunei and Sulu had fallen in love with the Sultan of Johor's daughter, Dayang Ayesha, who favoured the former. This contest between the two suitors led to a fierce sea battle and the eventual abduction of the princess by the Sultan of Brunei. The people of Johor were 'aghast': 'Death stared them in the face whether they went on to Sulu or returned to Brunei, so, cruising the seas, they picked up a living as best they could, stealing their wives from unwary villages.'[28] Another legend of the Bajaos' origins, similar to Rutter's, was recorded by the painter-anthropologist, A. Henry Savage Landor (1865-1924), who stated that the Bajaos had come from Johor 'according to some authorities'.[29]

In the works of Evans, Rutter and Landor there was a consistent effort to establish a clear boundary between the more 'civilized' Malays of the peninsula and the 'primitives' of Borneo, while claiming that the latter were related to the former but had degenerated over time. What is interesting is that this continuous linkage of the Bajaos to the peninsular Malay also applied to the Suluks. Pryer describes them as 'Malays with a considerable infusion of Arab and Chinese blood',[30] while Stamford

25 Ibid.: 93.
26 Evans 1992: 195.
27 Evans 1952: 55.
28 Rutter 1922: 73.
29 Landor 1904: 202.
30 Pryer 1887: 91.

Raffles (1781-1826) had earlier claimed that they were 'of mixed Malay and Philippine breed'.[31] In fact, Raffles acknowledged the multifarious cultures within the area, but instead chose to subscribe to easy and faulty generalizations:

> The island of Sumatra, as well as the islands of Java, Jana Uyi or Bugisland [Celebes], Sulu, and the Moluccas, which with Borneo, compose what may be properly termed the Malayan group, are peopled by nations radically distinct from the Malays, who speak languages, entirely different, and [who] use various written characters, original and peculiar to each [...] [though] I cannot but consider the Malayu nation as one people.[32]

Being a coastal people, the Suluks were associated with the Iranuns, but, in Rutter's view, 'less inert and more industrious; like the Bajaos, whom they despise as infidels, they are a race of sailors and their chief business is fishing and the collection of sea-produce'.[33] Despite being seen and cast as part of the 'piratical race', the outstanding feature of the Suluks – according to the Company's accounts of them – was their zealousness. Treacher, the first governor of North Borneo, who had assisted in negotiations with Baron von Overbeck in 1877, concurred with Rutter's description of the Suluks' industriousness in comparison to the coastal Bajaos and Iranuns. 'The Sulus are', he wrote, 'next to the Brunais, the most civilized race and, without any exception, the most warlike,' his reasoning being that they had been in a constant state of warfare for three centuries with the Spaniards of the Philippines though recently, 'their subjugation is by no means complete'[34]:

> The Sulus are a bloodthirsty and hard-hearted race, and, when an opportunity occurs, are not always averse to kidnapping even their own countrymen and selling them into slavery. They entertain a high notion of their own importance and are ever ready to resent with their krises the slightest affront which they may conceive has been put upon them.[35]

For Raffles, the debilitating flaw of the Suluk people lay in their innate savagery, for 'though active and enterprising, [they] are in point of character

31 Raffles 1830: 62.

32 From Raffles's paper 'On the Malayan Nation: With a Translation of Its Maritime Institutions', communicated to the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, in March 1809 (Raffles 1830: 15-21).

33 Rutter 1922: 77.

34 Treacher 1890: 96.

35 Ibid.: 97.

extremely vicious, treacherous, and sanguinary'. He cited his experience of having to withdraw a commercial resident in Balambangan in the eastern salient of Java due to 'constant civil commotions and the breaking down of the government [that] has covered the Sulu seas with fleets of formidable pirates'.[36] The Suluks were seen by him as ambitious and energetic, but also brutal in their repression of the Bajaos and Dusuns. Such a view fitted nicely into the Company's self-congratulatory narrative that its rule would benefit the population at large. In reality, much of the purported violence and treachery of the Suluks was also due the fact that the Sulu Sultanate could not – and did not – exercise total control over the outlying villages so far from the centre of royal power.

The divided nature of the North Borneo population, substantial external financial backing, and the territorial concessions extracted from both the Brunei and Sulu Sultanates, provided the Company with opportunities for its development. Yet it was expected to collapse within the first decade of its existence given its continuous financial troubles and ongoing local unrest. In the period leading up to the Mat Salleh Rebellion, a series of incidents involving the Muruts hampered economic production still further. These included the Padas-Kilas and the Padas-Damit Affairs of February and September 1888, the murder of Charles Walter Flint, and the subsequent massacre of the Murut at Pigau by Flint's brother, Charles Raffle Flint (1890), as well as the Malingkote incident of June 1891. Unable to discover resources like gold, silver, cinnabar, antimony, tin or precious metals, the Company's revenue earnings remained disappointingly low.[37] Combined with the scattered and isolated nature of Company's settlements, Company officials found it very hard to establish secure lines of communication and administrative control, which in turn rendered their legislation meaningless on the ground. It was for these reasons that the Company chose to focus on the development of their coastal trading stations instead. William C. Cowie, the managing director of the Company, attempted to address these concerns by designing large-scale projects. These included a cross-country trunk road, a telegraphic line, and rail networks linking Brunei Bay to Cowie Harbour. Together with Leicester P. Beaufort (1853-1926), who was promoted to be the new governor in 1895 (in office 1895-1899), the managers of the Company set out to impose heavier taxation to cover the cost of such projects. This included a poll tax, the licensing of boats, and a customs levy on the import and export of rice.[38]

36 Raffles 1830: 63.

37 BNBH, 16/6/1898, p. 179; Fernandez 1999: 86.

38 Black 1970: 183, Gueritz 1884: 329.

Prior to becoming governor, Beaufort had served as judicial commissioner and government secretary (1889-1891) and had established a system of village administration starting in 1891, which replicated Sarawak's indirect form of governance predicated on assistance from the native population themselves. Further consolidating the Company's position, the Code of Criminal Procedure, alongside Proclamation 3, led to the criminalization not only of transgressors, but also of anyone who harboured or colluded with 'kidnappers, slave-dealers, headhunters or other criminals'.[39] Chief officers were tasked with maintaining order in particular districts and could impose fines on residents of a village. As the Company attempted to suppress further turmoil and rebellions, these new rules, and the harsh punishments that accompanied them, were seen as the only way to impose order by suppressing the natives' supposed 'immorality'.

Prior to his own six-year rebellion (1894-1900), Mat Salleh had lived in Inanam at a time (1892) when the local tobacco estates had just been abandoned by the Company, which subsequently had a minimal presence in the area. This afforded Salleh almost total freedom.[40] He later moved to Sugut at a time when the Company was attempting to enforce its jurisdiction through the construction of a police station near the Sugut River. This station was subsequently attacked in May 1894, leading to the death of the two traders mentioned earlier. Their deaths were linked to Mat Salleh. The Company then demanded $1,000 in bond money from his father until his son was returned. This resulted in Mat Salleh duly meeting with an official and swearing obedience to the Company a month later. By January 1895, however, the Bajao-Suluk *datu* was said to be 'inciting people to run amok in Sandakan'.[41] He was also said to be building a following among the villagers of Pulau Jambongan. In June that year he was fined again for 'disobeying the rule as to calling at Government stations in passing',[42] while harbouring five men who had attempted to kill a Chinese.

However, it was only on 17 August 1895 that Mat Salleh and his Bajao and Suluk followers became a real threat to the Company. On that day he visited Buli Simsim (Sandakan district) along with several other village chiefs in three of his own *perahus* (river boats) and 26 boats carrying about 10-30 men each, to express discontent 'about native affairs in which they all had or pretended an interest'.[43] They stated their grievances to a messenger,

39 *Official Gazette*, 1/3/1891, pp. 88-89.

40 Black 1983: 140.

41 CO874/261, 17/2/1898, Beaufort to Charles Mitchell (Governor of the Straits Settlements, 1894-1899), p. 784.

42 Ibid.: 784.

43 BNBH, 1/1/1896, p. 5, CO874/256, 16-26/8/1895, Extracts from Treasurer General's Diary on Mat Sallay, p. 815.

named Imam, grievances which particularly concerned the conduct of the government officer, Haji Salahudin, at Jambongan. They also protested the new poll tax and mandatory passes to be issued to river craft and other boats. The Company's officials were horrified that Mat Salleh and his men had infringed the law prohibiting the carrying of weapons when they arrived 'dressed in their best most gaudy clothes and all wearing monstrous and handsome hilted krisses [...] [which were] unbound'. According to Ada Pryer, William Burgess Pryer's widow, they had declared their intention of a complete takeover of the capital, stating 'Mat Salleh is in Sandakan and is going to sack the place.'[44] Despite having his force in attendance, Mat Salleh and his men waited for two days to meet with the Sandakan government officers, including Governor Beaufort, who were all away on other expeditions. The only officer available was Treasurer-General Alexander Cook, who refused to meet them either out of fear or defiance.[45] No negotiations were possible between Cook and Mat Salleh, for the former would not negotiate until the latter had disarmed completely and returned home. Mat Salleh and his party sailed away on the third day. The Company recounted 'their boats were built up as if for fighting'[46] and were extremely concerned about the possible return of 'a man accused of harbouring a murderer, a great scoundrel [who] receives thieves and murderers who flatter his vanity. He had with him Badang (Suluk) who [had] murdered a Dayak last year, Si Long (Bajao), a notorious thief, and several others.'[47]

The Company's response was to retaliate with lethal force. On 30 August 1895, the Sandakan district magistrate, E.H. Barraut, and his colleague, the Sandakan constabulary adjutant, A. Jones, along with a company of policemen headed to Mat Salleh's village in Pulau Jambongan, bringing with them a warrant ordering him to give up several suspects accused of murder. The next day a confrontation erupted between Mat Salleh and the armed Dayak policemen. This resulted in the Bajao-Suluk *datu* and around 120 followers making good their escape into the surrounding jungle. Mat Salleh's possessions were subsequently confiscated, including his yellow silk parasol, his 70-foot-long *perahu*, several rifles and flags, while 'all hands

44 Pryer and Tarling 1989: 105, unsent letter regarding the event. Ada Blanche Locke Pryer (b. Newport, Monmouth, Wales, 25 October 1855) published an account of her life in Borneo with her husband, *A Decade in Borneo* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1893), edited by her friend Joseph Hatton (1841-1907). At the time of Mat Salleh's rebellion she was still living on her late husband's estate 20 km north of Sandakan.

45 Singh 2011: 191.

46 CO874/261, 17/2/1898, Beaufort to Charles Mitchell, p. 785.

47 Tarling 1985: 49.

then turned to and burnt the entire village and all boats (about nine)[48] in Jambongan. From that day Mat Salleh was a wanted man with a price on his head – Beaufort issued orders to shoot on sight both Salleh himself and anyone fighting on his side. A reward of $500 dollars for his capture on the grounds that this was what the common people wanted, namely to keep Sandakan safe from danger.[49] Notwithstanding the Company's claim that the violence meted out in Jambongan was part of its 'pacification' project for North Borneo, many natives – including Mat Salleh – were surprised by what they saw as the Company's unjustified reaction. Here again, it must be remembered, Company officials had already seen and presented the Bajaos and Suluks as violent communities who had to be brought under Company rule.

Mbembe has identified two traditions regarding the rationalization of the image of the colonized in the mind of the colonizers. The first he calls the 'Hegelian tradition', where the native is seen as possessing only physical drives and not capabilities 'in unshakeable rigidity, a material mass and mere inert object, consigned to the role of that which is there for nothing'.[50] The native can only act within the confines of their set racial attributes, which were in no way shared by the colonizer.[51] The second 'Bergsonian tradition', which Mbembe underscores, better suits the situation the indigenous people of North Borneo presenting the native as an animal to be domesticated and cared for, possessing drives that are no longer recognizably human. The colonizer develops a sense of sympathy for the colonized, who remains stuck within a world which was once familiar to the colonizer. Thus the 'master's affection for the animal presented itself as an inner force that should govern the animal',[52] in other words, a form of domestication and servitude.

The Bajaos and Suluks were seen as having the likeness of a Malay, but not completely so, for 'Bajao and Samales or seafarers; have a Malay (mostly Visayan) element evolving from captured slaves'.[53] Landor, the

48 BNBH, 1/1/1896, p. 5.

49 Tarling 1985: 50; CO874/256, 12/9/1895, p. 888; 28/8/1895, p. 813. British North Borneo (BNB) dollars currency.

50 Mbembe 2001: 26.

51 It was in this vein that Frank Athelstane Swettenham (1850-1946), the first Resident-General of the Federated Malay States (1896-1901) and who published *Malay Sketches* (London: John Lane, 1895) a year before he assumed his new office, stated that the Malay was 'lazy to a degree, is without method or order of any kind, knows no regularity even in the hours of his meals, and considers time as of no importance' (Swettenham 1895: 3).

52 Mbembe 2001: 27.

53 Landor 1904: 193.

English painter and anthropologist, captures the variant tiers of how 'civilized' the colonized were during his expedition throughout the eastern colonies:

> The distinction between some of the unmixed primordial races is so clear and broad, that there can be no doubt whatever about it, as in the examples of the Esquimaux, the Hottentot, the Australian, the pigmy negroes of the Andaman Islands, and the Papuans of New Guinea. In other cases, the difference is so slight, whether bodily or intellectually, that it is difficult to define it by words; and of this, the races inhabiting Europe and Hindustan are examples.[54]

Though identified as native subjects, the Bajaos and Suluks were thought to be a lower type of native altogether. G. Hewett, company officer in Province Keppel (1890-1896), stated in 1896 that reliance upon 'native labour would preclude successes, as the work would never be done. Native labour is plentiful, but it is hard to get and won't work.'[55] He later went on to become the British consul for Brunei and was involved in the hunt for Mat Salleh after the burning of Gaya.

Against the backdrop of the Company's shaky beginnings and its attempts to impose its authority – all of which was being done while developing the idea of the Bajaos and Suluks as primitive, animal-like savages – the Company was quick to react against Mat Salleh and his followers. The view of the native Other as the belligerent savage accounted for the violence that was used, as Evans noted in 1922:

> The Bajaus, having been undisciplined free-booters and rovers for many generations, did not take kindly to the rule of the Chartered Company, under which they were forced to give up their amusements of this kind. The consequence was that both they and the Illanuns [Iranuns], having found a leader in the so-called rebel, Mat Salleh, proceeded to resist the threatened restraint of the Company's rule to the best of their ability; but the Mat Salleh 'rebellion' was the only serious trouble which the Chartered Company have had with the natives from the time they first began to tighten their hold on the country.[56]

54 Crawfurd 1863a: 201.
55 CO874/259, 19/11/1896, G. Hewett to Secretary of the Governor, p. 465.
56 Evans 1922: 195.

Treacherous Headhunters *yang semacam Cina*: The Dumpas Rebellion

The Bajaos and Suluks were categorized as coastal peoples, and initially thought to be the two largest ethnic groups of North Borneo. The inland populations such as the Dusun and Muruts were not of particular importance to the Company for it was primarily interested in establishing its thalassocracy for trading profits and naval dominance. It was only during the Mat Salleh Rebellion – when he had managed to garner Dusun support for his cause – that interest in the 'interior peoples' or 'hill tribes' of Sabah began to grow.[57]

The inland population was given the blanket term 'Dusuns', 'people of the gardens' which was divided into many tribes hastily identified as Roongas, Kooroories, Umpooloms, Saga Sagas, Tunbunwhas, Tingaras, Roomanows, though they were favourably depicted as being a 'little better than roving savages' and 'much more cultivated both in their dress and manners' (*Handbook of British North Borneo* 1890: 34). Anthropologist ethnographers such as Ivor Evans and Owen Rutter, as well as Charles Hose (1863-1929) and William McDougall (1871-1938) – authors of *The Pagan Tribes of Borneo* (1912) – regarded the Dusuns and Muruts as 'pagans of the interior' as opposed to the Muslim communities of Borneo who were the Bajaos and Suluks. They were seen as 'timid', 'frugal', 'hard workers' who were 'primarily agriculturalists' constantly subjected to raids and maltreatment at the hands of the Muslim Bajaos and Suluks. In their view, the Company should offer them protection given that the 'history of this unfortunate people is one long tale of suffering at the hands of a stronger race'.[58]

In order to further the divide between the coastal and interior peoples, there was the consistently repeated assertion that the Dusuns were 'descendants of the Chinese', unlike the 'partially civilised Malays of the coast regions'.[59] Rutter was among those who wrote extensively on theories of the 'Dusun Chinese', alluding to a possible invasion by the Chinese at end of the thirteenth century. There was also, Rutter asserted, a supposed royal marriage between a Chinese ruler's daughter to the Sultan of Brunei apparently recorded in a genealogy book named *Selisilah* ('*silsilah*' is Malay for family tree, pedigree, genealogical chronicle), the existence of irrigation works and a bamboo bridge, not to speak of the legend of Mount Kinabalu, a toponym which in Malay meant

57 Appell 1976: 38.
58 Evans 1922: 31; Gudgeon 1913: 23.
59 Hose and McDougall 1912: 30.

'Chinese widow'.[60] Beyond such historical conjectures, a clear separation between the coastal and inland communities was based on pseudo-scientific observations regarding their physical differences: Dusuns were thought to be diochecephalic (long-headed), while the Bajaos were described as Proto-Malayan and brachycephalic (short-headed).[61] G. Hewett and the editor of the *British North Borneo Herald* had also described the Dusuns as descendants of Chinese who had 'intermarried with some existing native tribe'.[62]

Later editions of the *Handbook of the State of North Borneo*, published in 1921 and 1934, listed the three main groups that made up the native population of North Borneo as the Dusuns (117,482), followed by the Bajaos (34,099) and the Muruts (24,444). This contrasted with the earlier 1886 and 1890 editions of the *Handbook* which claimed erroneously that the Suluks and Bajaos made up the majority of the native population. Their social practices such as headhunting were thought of as obsolete by then as headhunting tattoos could only be seen on middle-aged men.[63] In studies of the Dusuns, completed in the wake of the Mat Salleh Rebellion, the biological superiority of the Dusuns vis-à-vis the other communities was often emphasized:

> Usually of short but sturdy build and are of lighter complexion than most of the other native tribes. A peaceable and law-abiding race, with a strongly developed agricultural instinct, they may be looked upon as the farmers of the country; they produce most of the padi (rice) grown and they also grow tobacco. [...] Widely, distributed, the Dusun population is mainly located on the north and west coasts and at Tambunan in the Interior; their plantations are as a rule considerably superior to those of other native races.[64]

60 Rutter 1929: 40-41.

61 Evans 1922: 187.

62 BNBH, 3/4/1923, pp. 67-68.

63 BNBH, 1/10/1914, p. 160, Reprinted from Ivor Evans, *Notes on the Religious Beliefs, Superstitions, Ceremonies and Tabus of the Dusuns of the Tuaran and Tempassuk Districts, British North Borneo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923), later published under the title *Studies in Religion, Folk-lore and Custom in British North Borneo and the Malay Peninsula*. Evans briefly (1910-1911) served as cadet district officer in the service of the Company in Tempasuk and Tuaran Districts, before transferring to Peninsular Malaya in 1912, where he became the long-serving Curator of the Perak State Museum in Taiping (in office 1917-1932). His year as a cadet officer in Tempasuk and Tuaran had given him the material to write on Dusun customs from Ulu Bundu Tuan district village just over the divide between North Keppel and the interior. This was one of the districts which had surrendered to the Company in 1897 after aiding Mat Salleh.

64 See *Handbook of the State of British North Borneo* 1920: 41; *Handbook of the State of North Borneo* 1934: 37-28.

As the Company relied heavily on agricultural exports, chiefly tobacco, the Dusuns were regarded as being more important to the local economy as 'economically active citizens'. Hence, the only industries state-sponsored Chinese coolies could participate in were agricultural. Some became absorbed into the indigenous population which worked within this sector, and came to be known as Sino-Dusuns.[65] Edward Peregrine Gueritz (1855-1938), who served as governor of North Borneo from 1904 to 1911, wrote in 1884 that 'the native cannot be dependent upon'[66] and, underscoring his preference for the Chinese as the Company's preferred labour force, he asserted that 'the value of the Chinese in a new country like this, is well known, and as a pioneer, [so, too, is] his assistance in making the Government known to the natives of the interior'.[67]

The combined effect of these sweeping generalizations was the creation of homogenous ethnic blocs and stereotypes imbued with essentialist traits. These were seen in biological terms, and were thus irreversible in nature. In the course of building these all-encompassing categories little time was spent on trying to understand and explain the causes of the Mat Salleh Rebellion itself. As rebellions represented the opposite of stability and order, the explanation put forward to explain and understand such disturbances focused on the supposed guilt and responsibility of the troublemakers themselves. Little attempt was made to take account of Company actions which had led to the uprisings in the first place – such as the deep unpopularity of the new taxation laws in the case of the 1896 Dumpas Rebellion.[68] It came as a surprise to the Company that Mat Salleh managed to garner considerable support among the Dumpas Dusuns, and they would later lay the blame on Mat Salleh for 'corrupting' their otherwise peaceful and law-abiding nature. With the Company committed to putting a final end to the rebellion, on 1 October 1895 parties of Dayaks were sent to attack a chief named Mandalas in Sunsurut, in retribution for protecting Mat Salleh. This was followed by attacks on Penendakan Lingkabau in Sugut on 11 and 14 October. Though they failed to capture Mat Salleh himself, his stronghold at Lingkabau was destroyed and several Dusuns were arrested for assisting in its construction.[69]

65 Lee 1965: 309.
66 Gueritz 1884: 332.
67 Ibid.: 332.
68 Worsley 1961: 27; Žižek 1994: 4.
69 BNBH, 1/11/1896, p. 306.

Beaufort issued a call for Mat Salleh to surrender in July 1896. He refused and instead moved his base to Labuk, where the Dumpas rebellion broke out the following month (August 1896). The Dumpas Dusuns living up the Labuk River had also refused to pay the Company's poll tax and made Mat Salleh honorary chief of Labuk. This act of defiance infuriated the Company. The *British North Borneo Herald* described the tribe as 'never [having] been credited with the qualities which are supposed to denote law-abiding subjects'.[70] Quite apart from how the Dusuns were usually assumed to behave, the *Herald* failed to appreciate the grievances of the Dumpas Dusuns themselves. Instead, the *Herald* editor opined that this particular disobedient tribe lacked normal 'Dusun' characteristics. In support of this view, the newspaper included the less than sympathetic account of the Dumpas Dusuns penned by the British explorer, Ferenc Xavier Witti (aka Francis Xavier Wittisheim), the first European to visit the area in 1881, who had been killed by the Muruts in June 1892. Witti had stated that 'recent experiences show that they have not changed their habits. [...] [N]on-Mahomedan natives accuse them of emulating and even surpassing the Sulus in oppressing the weak on every pretext.'[71]

The Company had sent Dayak police to the junction of Ansuan, near Buis village, after Mat Salleh had sent a message through Pangeran Puas stating the Dayak traders living at Buis must see him. Failure to do so, he warned, would mean that he would come to kill them and capture their native chiefs who lived in the vicinity. The Dayaks decided to meet 'the danger' head-on to prevent fighting reaching the areas where their own families resided.[72] As they made their way down the river, a spy boat had tipped Mat Salleh off and fire erupted with Dumpas on the right and left while Mat Salleh's followers were at the front advancing against the Dayaks. When retiring to an adjoining village to build a stockade, some of the Dumpas Dusuns were noted to have lent their assistance to the Company, too. The local district officer, Mr Wheatley, was also attacked when going down the river to Kapasir, killing three paddlers as he escaped to Peranchangan.[73] The biggest disadvantage faced by the Company was the evident lack of local support to guide them through the difficult terrain.[74] Several expeditions were assembled in the following two months to pursue Mat Salleh and his

70 BNBH, 1/12/1896, p. 336.

71 Ibid.

72 Ibid.

73 CO874/259, 26/9/1896, Letter from Raffles Flint, Acting Commandant commanding the expedition against Mat Salleh and the Dumpas rebels, to the Governor's Secretary, pp. 294-296.

74 BNBH, 1/12/1896, p. 336.

Dumpas Dusuns: one was led by Charles Raffles Flint to Labuk, another by R.M. Little went to Sugut, whereas A.R. Dunlop went up the Paitan and Kapuakan Rivers, respectively. These expeditions eventually closed in on the Kapuakan and Lingkabau Rivers, Raffles Flint pointing out that the Dusuns 'all speak in great fear of Mat Salleh' thus it was 'necessary to clear the Lingkabau entirely as long as Mat Salleh has a chance of returning here as the people are afraid not to assist him if he demands it'.[75]

By this stage in the campaign, the Company's view of the Dusuns tended to divide the community into two distinct camps, namely the 'good' and 'loyal' Dusuns who still served the Company, and the 'savage' Dusuns who had joined the ranks of Mat Salleh's force while 'leaving their wives and children in our hands'.[76] The logic of this argument identified any Suluk living among the Dusuns as 'a foreigner'. This further entrenched the differences between the native communities in the eyes of Company officials who now brought the Dumpas Dusun into the compartmentalizing logic of the Company's divisive race relations. In the wake of the Dumpas rebellion, the Dusuns of Dumpas were no longer permitted to travel to Ulu Labuk to trade, and those who were released were exiled permanently to Tawau – thereby removing them from their home territories and isolating them from the other law-abiding or 'good' Dusuns favoured by the Company. Meanwhile, their leader, Dumpas Panglima Tatek, eluded capture and remained with Mat Salleh as the latter continued his five-year revolt against the Company.[77]

The outcome of the Dumpas rebellion – part of Mat Salleh's broader and longer revolt against Company rule – was the reassertion of colonial attitudes towards the different native communities of North Borneo. The Bajaos and Suluks had already been cast in a negative light as 'savage' and 'warlike', while the Dusuns had been framed in a more positive manner as 'docile' and 'law-abiding'. The anomaly represented by the Dumpas Dusuns, who chose to side with Mat Salleh, was addressed by their eradication and exile. No attempt was made to understand the root causes of their dissatisfaction. With the Dumpas Dusuns defeated, the Company was able to return to its main objective of defeating Mat Salleh for good, for the human cost of the Dumpas expedition was borne mainly by the Dusuns themselves, who bore the brunt of the Company's wrath. As Beaufort noted:

75 CO874/259, 4/10/1896, p. 354, Raffles Flint to the Governor's Secretary.

76 CO874/259, 5/9/1896, p. 102, BNBH, 1/12/1896, p. 336-337; The wives and children of the 'Dumpas rebels' were detained as hostages. See CO874/259, 28/11/1896, p. 501.

77 BNBH, 16/2/1897, p. 46.

> [T]he tenor of the report is more hopeful and points to the breakup of Mat Salleh's gang and the punishment of some of those who have actively assisted him. I propose directing Mr. Flint now to withdraw the expedition, leaving some men at Kuala Sugut and Labuk as the people in the interior are reported to be suffering severely from famine in consequence of the general disquiet.[78]

Mat Salleh continued to elude the Company's forces. At Padang in Ulu Sugut in March 1897 he had built another fort, before moving to his hometown at Inanam on the West Coast.

The Burning of Gaya and Ambong: Politicizing Responsibility in the North Borneo Armed Constabulary

Another group of people that became heavily involved with the Mat Salleh Rebellion were the Sikhs, Pathans and Dayaks who were members of the North Borneo Armed Constabulary (NBAC) formed in 1882. The involvement of these Asians increasingly blurred the clear-cut binary between the colonizer and colonized. In their role as native/Asiatic defenders of the colonial administration, they were sometimes seen as 'good immigrant Asians' who could be counted upon by the Company to defend its interests.

By the time the rebellion broke out in 1895 many Dayaks had been expelled from Sarawak and were then living freely while 'boating and raiding' in North Borneo.[79] Nakoda Bali and Nakoda Tinggi with their 'gang of Dayaks' repeatedly gave excuses as to why they could not support the Company, only agreeing to do so when a salary was agreed upon (instead of a post-campaign reward). The lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Dayaks gave rise to doubts as to whether they could be counted on for the rest of the campaign.[80] Nevertheless, some Dayaks did eventually agree to join in the operations against Mat Salleh, given that the option of not doing so was even less palatable, namely imprisonment in Sarawak.

78 CO874/259, 26/10/1896, Beaufort to Richard Martin, p. 349.

79 CO874/255, 25/10/1894, Creagh to Richard Martin, p. 478.

80 CO874/257, 12/11/1896, Letter by E.H. Barraut, a district magistrate who was previously district officer on the east coast of Kudat, p. 173; CO874/261, 6/10/1897, p. 143, Minutes of Council Meeting held at Sandakan taken down by the secretary to the governor, G.F.M. Ennis, and signed off by E.H. Barraut. The meeting was attended by Governor Beaufort, Sandakan Constabulary Commandant, Captain J.M. Reddie, the Treasurer-General and the Commissioner of Lands.

Due to the Company's lingering doubts about the Dayaks, the preferred force were the Sikhs and Pathans. In the colonial imaginary the Sikhs of the disbanded Khalsa army were regarded as a 'martial race'. Indeed, in the wake of the two Anglo-Sikh wars in the Punjab (1845-1846, 1848-1849), the Sikhs were regarded as being among the most loyal defenders of the British Empire. Joseph Davey Cunningham (1812-1851), the historian of the Sikhs under the British Raj, wrote that 'the Sikhs settled down peacefully and loyally under the new regime', with the editor of the revised second edition (1918) noting that 'they have displayed their warlike aptitude in other fields since 1857 and are to be found to-day taking their share in the great European War'.[81] The Sikh community's default function as troops and policemen extended to the whole Britsh Empire, 'not only for Burmah, the Straits Settlements, Malacca, Borneo, Hongkong, and our other settlements in the Far East, but also to Africa'.[82]

Governor Creagh wrote in favour of the Sikhs when he described them as 'the best and cheapest force for this country. […] [It] has always appeared as obvious to me that the Punjabis are and must be the backbone of the Constabulary.'[83] The Sikhs were said to form the majority of the police force, with the rest being Somalis from Africa, Brunei Malays and Dayaks. At the time of the Mat Salleh Rebellion, the constabulary had a total force of about 300 men, under a captain commandant.[84] After Beaufort commented on how Labuk, Sugut and Jambongan had been made safe, he outlined the various 'classes of men' suitable to form the constabulary force mobilized against Mat Salleh and his followers. These were the 'blue jackets [colonial marines] [that] would make the best possible party; that well trained Sikhs would come next; and that white troops (and Dayaks) would be the last resort'.[85] The assumption here was that the colonial soldier or policeman was most effective when he was culturally different from the colonized people he was meant to police and guard against.

81 Cunningham 1918: xii. Cunningham's classic history of the Sikhs, first published by John Murray in London in 1853, was updated and reissued by H.L.O. Garrett (1881-1941) in 1918.

82 BNBH, 16/2/1898, p. 60.

83 CO874/255, 25/10/1894, pp. 478-479. Charles Vandeleur Creagh (1842-1917) was Acting Captain Superintendent of Police in Hong Kong in 1867 and Assistant Resident (Secretary to the Government) of Perak in the 1880s before becoming Governor of North Borneo from 1888 to 1895. Leceister Paul Beaufort took over as governor in 1895 and served until 1899.

84 See *Handbook of British North Borneo* 1890: 106, which reported that Sikhs made up most of the British North Borneo Constabulary and is most probably inaccurate as in the attack against Ranau on 10 December 1897 there were only 38 Sikhs and Pathans among 250 Dyaks and Dusuns as stated in BNBH, 1/1/1898, p. 7. Beaufort also later asked for more 'Indians' to be sent from the government of the Straits Settlements, CO874/260, 5/9/1987, p. 920.

85 CO874/261, 2/11/1897, Beaufort writes to Richard Martin that he was unable to carry out Martin's order 'to engage Sikhs' from Sarawak and Singapore (p. 277).

In 1897, Mat Salleh chose to go on the offensive as he directed his attention to the Company's coastal trading stations. Because of the celebration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, the Dayak police, who were supposed to be on the lookout for Mat Salleh, were left unsupervised. Given their meagre monthly salary of just $10 North Borneo Company dollars (£120 in present-day terms) they chose to do nothing.[86] On 9 July, Mat Salleh and his men attacked and plundered every government building on Gaya Island, seizing weapons and whatever goods they found at the trading port.[87] Despite the fact that Mat Salleh's uncle, O.K. Mahomed Serail, then serving as the Company's appointed chief at Inanam, was on Gaya Island at the time, many Bajaos residing in Gaya prior to the attack supported Mat Salleh as well. Other Bajaos noted to have been involved were from Mengakabong and Menggatal.[88] The Company's Eurasian treasury clerk, Frederick Saxby Neubronner, was taken prisoner by Mat Salleh while G. Hewett, who was now the Acting Resident of Gaya, was away at Sandakan at that time.

In the wake of the attack on Gaya, the Company attempted to induce the Abai and Tempasuk chiefs to arrest the 'murderers of the two Dayak traders'. A $3,000 reward was put on Mat Salleh's head for whomever captured him dead or alive. They then embarked on a scorched-earth policy, setting out to 'burn out all the villages on the hills within range of us'.[89] This involved a dozen villages in total, comprising some 570 separate houses and $20,000 worth of paddy. Most of the civilians caught between Mat Salleh and the Company's forces sought refuge in Brunei, where the Company maintained neither offices nor police within the sultan's jurisdiction.[90] Nevertheless, the Company wasted no time in punishing the Inanam people, handing over the rights to their paddy fields, which were now ready for planting, to the Dayaks. The Dayaks of the Company's security force were deemed responsible for the debacle due to their negligence. This opened the way for increased recruitment of 'more reliable Sikhs and Pathans' who would

86 Black 1983: 147. In comparison, the earliest recorded salary was the monthly salary received by Captain Harrington in 1913: $5,850, CO874/356, 3/11/1913, p. 2. The British North Borneo Company dollar was pegged to the Straits Settlements dollar, whose exchange rate was fixed in 1906 at two shillings and four pence. Present-day values have been calculated on the basis of PPP (Purchasing Power Parity) by using 'Purchasing Power of the Pound – Measuring Worth' tool at https://www.measuringworth.com.

87 CO874/261, 5/9/1897, Beaufort to Richard Martin, p. 89.

88 BNBH, 1/8/1897, p. 202.

89 CO874/261, 6/10/1897, Minutes of Council Meeting held at Sandakan, p. 143; 3/1/1898, John Hughes to HBM's Consul for Brunei, p. 924; BNBH, 1/8/1897, p. 203.

90 CO874/261, 31/12/1897, John Hughes to HBM's Consul for Brunei, p. 920; BNBH, 1/12/1896, p. 336.

eventually replace them.[91] With a meagre salary of $8 (£100 in present-day terms) every month for three months for the damages caused by the Company at Inanam, Beaufort justified these measures as assisting the Sultan of Brunei in 'keeping order'.[92]

After the attack on Gaya, Mat Salleh continued to move around Labuk and Sugut. By the end of July 1897 Si Gadong of Tiong Tiong – a local man who had had his village at Pinassang burnt by the Company due to buffalo thieving and irregular payment of the poll tax – made an agreement with Mat Salleh to burn and sack Ambong. The local Dusun population of Ambong were identified as part of the oppressed 'Dusun tribes [that] are anxious to submit to the Government' but were now, according to official reports, 'frightened [...] into joining Mat Salleh',[93] thus mirroring the Company's view of Dusuns as meek and acquiescent. Meanwhile, the Tempasuk Bajaos were given a hefty fine of $1,890 (at the rate of $5 per man) to be paid within four days for murdering two policemen at Abai, while the people of Bubol, Gunding and Ulu Gading were also given two days to dismantle their downriver villages before they were burnt to the ground. The orders were given by the local commander, Captain Reddie, and Mr. Wahen. In November 1897, with Si Gadong of Tiong Tiong now allied to Mat Salleh, the Bajao-Suluk *datu* now went on the offensive again. His men attacked and burned another government Residency at Ambong port, which had been built as recently as 1895. The Tempasuk Bajaos from Pirasan and Kota Belud, around 80 to 90 men in all, joined the attack on Ambong along with around 20 Suluks and many natives from the interior,[94] although Mat Salleh himself was not present during the attack with the assault being led by his brother-in-law.[95]

The officials of the Company came under heavy criticism after Mat Salleh's successful sacking of their coastal trading stations. The Company was accused of being too soft in its approach to the rebels. There were even suggestions that the territory of North Borneo should be placed under the rule of the Sarawak government instead.[96] As the Company teetered on the brink of collapse, Beaufort appealed to the Colonial Office in London for protection, citing the costly price of keeping a sizeable Company police force in the field for the years 1897 and 1898, the cost being estimated at

91 CO874/260, 20/7/1897, Beaufort to Richard Martin, p. 740.
92 Ibid.: 740-741.
93 BNBH, 1/9/1897, p. 243.
94 CO874/261, 18/11/1897, G. Hewett to Beaufort, p. 395.
95 CO874/261, 27/11/1897, Beaufort to Richard Martin, p. 422.
96 BNBH, 16/10/1897, pp. 289-290.

$85,000 and $82,000, respectively.[97] He also demanded that the Sultan of Brunei pay compensation for the invasions.[98] Gaya was never rebuilt, and its main port was later moved to nearby Jesselton some eight nautical miles distant.

A month later, on 10 December 1897, the Company finally found Mat Salleh's fort in Ranau and cut off its water supply. They then set up camp and started investing the fortifications, ready to take them by storm at the earliest opportunity. The force comprised of 250 Dayaks and Dusuns led by the Sandakan district and Province Keppel magistrates, E.H. Barraut and G. Ormsby, respectively, 38 Sikhs and Pathans led by the Papar magistrate, P.F. Wise, and the Acting Resident of Gaya, G. Hewett, along with eighteen Chinese coolies marshalled by the Dieudonné Ranau estate manager, K. Dieudonné.[99] Despite heavy shelling of the fort, they were met by fire that eventually crippled the force. Before they left 'we burnt everything there that would burn',[100] though were once again impressed by the strength of the fort:

> The fort was a most extraordinary place and without the guns would have been absolutely impregnable. The buildings covered three sides of a square, the fourth side being closed by a stone wall. The whole square was 22 yards by 20 and the fact that over 200 shells burst inside will give you some idea of its strength, the enemy still remaining in possession. The walls of the buildings were of stone, 8 feet thick with numerous large bamboos built into them for loopholes. The whole fort was surrounded with three bamboo fences with the twigs left on and the ground between was simply covered with *sudas* [bamboo spikes].[101]

97 CO874/261, 13/5/1898, Beaufort to Richard Martin, p. 1037.

98 CO874/260, 2/8/1897, Beaufort to Richard Martin, p. 755; CO874/261, 31/12/1897, p. 92; 5/4/1898, R.M. Little to Richard Martin, p. 907; 3/1/1898, John Hughes to HBM's Consul for Brunei, p. 924. After Beaufort had demanded compensation for the burning of Gaya, and threatened requisition of the Sultan of Brunei's properties who claimed the district of Kuala Lama, Inanam, and all districts to the north of the Padas River as his property for an annual sum of $18,000. Instead, the Sultan of Brunei sued the Company $100,000 for:

1 The violation of the Treaty of 5 August 1896, which reads that raid agents and police have the authority to arrest, raid, collect taxes and duties.
2 The loss of prestige to the Sultan by the invasion of his territory.
3 The loss of 17 lives and a great number of wounded.
4 The destruction of 570 houses and their contents these being valued at less than $100 each.

99 BNBH, 1/1/1898, p. 7; 16/4/1898, p. 117.

100 BNBH, 1/1/1898, p. 7.

101 BNBH, 16/4/1898, p. 118.

Hewett praised the conduct of the Sikhs and Pathans who took part in the operation. However, one Sikh, who was formerly in the constabulary, named Ganga Singh, had defected to the other side and joined Mat Salleh's band instead. (He was recorded as 'the bastard Sikh' who eventually died in the standoff.[102]) Despite this betrayal by a solitary Sikh policeman, the blame for Mat Salleh's burning of Gaya and Ambong and the Company force's failure to capture Ranau fort was placed full square on the Dayaks, who were seen as a liability. This was particularly the case when it was observed that almost the entire Dayak company had retired behind a bank during the heat of battle and had refused to fight, 'keeping in the rear and paying no attention to the word of command'.[103] The Dayaks guarded one side of the fort, refusing assistance from the Sikh patrol. Later, the tracks of Mat Salleh and his followers were found, indicating that they had yet again managed to make good their escape. For the Company officials who held a low opinion of the Dayaks in general the outcome of this engagement demonstrated once again just 'how much reliance can be placed upon Dayaks'.[104] The Company magistrate in Papar, P.F. Wise, would later comment that the Dayaks had 'generally proved themselves utterly useless in real fighting like this'.[105]

This was the pivotal moment when the Company's view of the Dayaks changed for good.[106] The Company appealed to the government of the Straits Settlements for military assistance, which was refused. The enraged Beaufort called the Dayaks 'a lot of cowards that have at any rate been very lazy except for one fight. [...] [T]heir employment has been entirely without useful result.'[107] The Company was losing control of the majority of its force. Over a short space of time, this force had grown utterly weary of the Ranau fort siege. The combination of constant frontline service and the necessity of risking their lives for a foreign company which paid them poorly and compelled them to serve under white officers drained their morale. The Company in turn grew increasingly desperate in its search for fresh troops whose loyalty could be counted upon. Rather than admit the fact that Mat Salleh had been victorious – at least temporarily – the blame

102 BNBH, 16/2/1898, p. 57.

103 CO874/250, 21/8/97, pp. 927-928.

104 BNBH, 16/4/1898, p. 118.

105 CO874/261, 14/1/1898, Letter from P.F. Wise to Beaufort, p. 716; See CO874/260, 28/8/1897, p. 921 for an account of the Ranau expedition from the Sandakan Constabulary Commandant, Captain J.M. Reddie, in a letter to Beaufort as well. He also agreed that 'if 100 Sikhs and Pathans were raised that another expedition would easily capture the fort'.

106 CO874/260, 5/9/1987, Beaufort to Richard Martin, p. 920.

107 CO874/261, 21/9/1897, Beaufort to Richard Martin, pp. 37-38.

for the Company's poor showing was placed instead on the shoulders of the Dayak warriors of the Company constabulary. There was a desperate need for a different strategy in order to win more support from the natives. Hence, the punishment meted out to those involved with the Gaya, Ambong and Ranau debacles centred heavily on conscription issues. At the same time, there was the need to gather 'a whole spectrum of forces, from the elite volunteer, through conscripts, militias, partisans, auxiliaries, coolies and defence labourers, to military and sexual slaves'[108] to defend the Company's precarious position. And all the while, Mat Salleh's influence extended even further across Gaya, Mengakabong, Menggatal, Abai, Tempasuk, Inanam, Pirasan, Kota Belud to Ranau.

Disillusionment in Cooperation, Resistance and Formation of Sovereignty: The Palatan Peace Pact

As Mat Salleh moved from one village to another, having gained the support of the locals, the Company tightened its grip on these areas, and punished those involved with heavy sanctions. A pattern emerged where the Bajao-Suluk *datu* managed to gain the help of different communities. The clashes would continue and in time the Company was able to extend its reach to villages which had not yet swung definitively to Mat Salleh's side. This was the paradoxical nature of Mat Salleh's resistance – his rebellion compelled the Company to extend its sphere of control and the more the Company tried to expand its influence the more Mat Salleh and his followers were determined to resist it.

Lieutenant-Commander Spencer Victor Yorke de Horsey RN (1863-1937) of HMS *Plover*, a Royal Navy composite screw gunboat which had sailed up from Singapore to join the fight against Mat Salleh, was adamant about continuing the battle. But the newly arrived Company director general, William Clark Cowie (in office 1897-1909), had different plans. He eventually intervened after the Company's forces had failed to capture Mat Salleh at Ranau, now deciding on a different approach and hoping that the conflict could be settled amicably instead.[109] Drawing on his close relationship with the Sultan of Sulu, Jamalul-Kiram II (r. 1894-1936), he promised the latter an additional 6 per cent per annum ($10,000 when added to the previously agreed figure) to help finance the sultan's pilgrimage to Mecca. The sultan,

108 Hack and Retting 2006: 4.
109 Cowie 1898: 2.

in turn, agreed to Cowie's request to write a letter to Dayang Bandang, Mat Salleh's wife. On 17 January 1898, the sultan wrote to the rebel's wife, claiming that she could trust Cowie, and that he himself 'look[ed] upon him as a father, just like my late old father, Sultan Mahomet Jemal ul-Alam [r. 1862-1881]. In fact, I look upon him as one of my own relations'[110] and advised that she meet with him. Nevertheless, the Company found another letter sent from the sultan's palace that expressed his wish for Mat Salleh to continue his fight, a missive which the sultan denied all knowledge of, assuring Cowie that he was on the side of the British.[111]

With the sultan's seal, Cowie wrote to Mat Salleh on 18 March 1898, stating that he could be trusted, and that he hoped to put an end to the conflict. He offered to pardon him and his followers if he submitted to his demands, evidenced by the envoys who would deliver the letter. They were Jalal, Juman, Bitawang and Adun, previously rebels who had sided with Mat Salleh and who had now been released from jail 'for [this] special purpose'.[112]

Mat Salleh agreed to meet Cowie. On 19 April 1898, the Company director general travelled alone to meet Mat Salleh at Pangeran Kahar's village, Kampung Palatan, by the Menggatal River.[113] This was the first time a high-ranking Company official had met face to face with Mat Salleh, whom Cowie referred to as the 'Rob Roy of British North Borneo'. Yet, in his recounting of the event, Cowie would also describe Mat Salleh and his men in the same way the Company had first depicted them at Sandakan:

> In all we numbered about two hundred and fifty when we came in view of Mahomed Salleh, the invulnerable, and the savage looking crew whom he had cleverly induced to accompany him from Tambunan. […] The number of Mat Salleh's own followers did not exceed twenty, but the Tambunans and others [whom] he had picked up on his way to the coast, made quite an imposing display.[114]

As in the case of the Sandakan encounter, the Company was unhappy with Mat Salleh's insistence on bringing armed men, viewing it as a breach of law and custom.[115] Cowie reneged on his word regarding the release of Mat

110 Ibid.: 18-19; CO874/261, 17/12/1897, Translation of Letter from the Sultan of Sulu to Dayang Bandang, p. 917.
111 CO874/262, 25/7/1898, Beaufort to Richard Martin, p. 402.
112 Cowie 1898: 19.
113 BNBH, 2/5/1898, p. 133.
114 Cowie 1898: 31.
115 BNBH, 2/5/1898, p. 133.

Salleh's men (with the exception of two individuals due to their old age). Furthermore, Cowie would not negotiate the government's claim to Ulu Sugut and Ulu Inanam, which Mat Salleh insisted belonged to him and his people by virtue of age-old royal grants from by the Sultans of Sulu and Brunei. One of Mat Salleh's few recorded statements, subsequently cited by historians on a regular basis to explain the main motive of his struggle, was recorded by Cowie, who admitted he was right: '[A]t any rate, you will admit that your Company cannot prevent us from dying for what we think are our rights.'[116] Cowie also noted Mat Salleh's courteousness when he asked for a chair for Cowie but not for himself, while explaining that '[as] I have come to submit, I shall sit on the grass beneath you.'[117] In an attempt to prove his desire for a peaceful resolution, Mat Salleh even made a symbolic surrender of his spear and *keris* to Cowie during their negotiation. Despite Mat Salleh's overtures, some Company officials remained unconvinced. Gaya Acting Resident G. Hewett warned that the negotiation would only bring about a temporary cessation of hostilities. Indeed, so concerned was Hewitt at this turn of events that he resigned soon afterwards.[118]

On 22 April, Governor Beaufort, Cowie, Wise, Pearson, Mat Salleh, Dato Sahak, Pangeran Kahar, a group of Sikh police, blue jackets and marines from the gun vessel HMS *Swift* and several other 'natives' were present for the flag hoisting ceremony on board the steamship SS *Petrel*. Pangeran Jeludin came to Menggatal as the official representative of the Sultan of Brunei to hand over all his rivers and territories in Province Keppel and pledge allegiance to the Company.[119] Signifying submission and total recognition of the Company's rule, it was suggested that Mat Salleh should be the person to raise the flag of the Sabah governor after taking an oath of allegiance. When invited to unfurl the flag, a Union Jack emblazoned at the centre with a dark red lion rampant facing left on a yellow disk – known as the 'Sabah Jack of the Chartered Company' – he demurred, declaring: 'Bukan ini bendera sahaya akun. Sekarang aku kena tipu. Jikalau bagitu baik-lah mari kita naik ka *darat* serta berprang lagi.' ('This is not the flag I acknowledge. I have been cheated. Let us return to the *hills* and carry on the war.')[120]

116 Cowie 1898: 32.

117 Ibid.: 32.

118 CO874/262, 5/7/1898, E.H. Barraut to Richard Martin, p. 300.

119 CO875/261, 24/3/1898, Beaufort to Richard Martin, p. 856.

120 Cowie 1898, between p. 34 and p. 35. A correction letter later written on what Mat Salleh had actually said. Emphasis mine.

Despite this setback Mat Salleh signed the written agreement sent to him on 23 April 1898.[121] He believed that all those who were once considered guilty had now been pardoned. He thus issued a statement they were now free to live openly and return to their respective villages.[122] Confusion followed as some in the Company believed that the pardoning of Mat Salleh and his followers undermined the authority of local government officers, with prisoners taken in previous raids now seizing the opportunity to escape. Matters were left unresolved as the Company court initially wanted the campaign against Mat Salleh to continue with no room for compromise, while the High Commissioner thought otherwise. With Cowie having now returned to London and Beaufort left to negotiate whatever had previously been agreed informally between Cowie and Mat Salleh,[123] the peace pact hung in the balance merely buying time for both sides before the inevitable resumption of hostilities which few doubted would occur in the near future.

The Expedition to End All 'Small Wars': Despotic Order at Tambunan

The term 'small war' – literally meaning asymmetric warfare when the balance of force is asymmetrically distributed between opponents – was first used by the British army in 1886 and was simply defined as 'the expeditions against savages and semi-civilized races by disciplined soldiers, [...] to suppress rebellions and guerilla warfare in all parts of the world where organized armies are struggling against opponents who will not meet them in the open field'.[124] Despite the efforts of the North Borneo Company to contain the Mat Salleh Rebellion and to reach out to the local communities of North Borneo, there remained a significant number of locals who refused to cooperate. As Beaufort stated:

> The Tambunan people in whose country, as near to whom Mat Sali [Salleh] is, have never submitted to the Company, but have always said that if they were left alone they would leave the Company alone, but that if white people entered their country they would be [resisted]. It

121 The terms of this written agreement can be found in Appendix A.

122 CO874/262, 28/4/1898, Copy of a notice from Mat Salleh 'to make known to everyone how the Governor has pardoned Mohammad Sali', p. 21; 25/5/1898, P.F. Wise to the Governor's Secretary, pp. 82-83.

123 CO874/262, 23/11/1898, Beaufort to Richard Martin, pp. 948, 957.

124 Callwell 1906: 21.

> is of course doubtful whether they would, in the event of an expedition to their country, be friendly, neutral or hostile. If they were hostile, we should require a strong force, as they have always been reported to be well armed and numerous.[125]

Tambunan was one of the last localities to submit to the North Borneo Company, and Mat Salleh was allowed to reside there as their chief with an allowance of $30 per month (£360 in present-day terms).[126] The Palatan Peace Pact stated that 'Mat Salleh will be allowed to live at Tambunan, or elsewhere in the interior, except on the rivers Sugut and Labuk. The Government hopes he will use his influence to induce the tribes there to follow the Government."[127] He quickly gained a reputation as a man endowed with supernatural powers, with rumours that Mat Salleh's mouth could emit flames, that his *parang* could produce a flash of lightning, and that rice scattered by him would magically transform into weapons. Beaufort noted that the people of Tambunan had made it clear they would not submit to Mat Salleh or the Company, preferring to be left alone to sell their rice for their sustenance and daily needs.[128] Once again a division was drawn within the Tambunan population dividing the community into two distinct groups: between the Tegas Dusuns and Tiawan Dusuns. Framed as bitter rivals who conducted 'guerilla warfare against each other',[129] the Tegas were said to have never gained any ground. At this time Mat Salleh was occupied with quarrels between his own followers, with some of his men upset with him for not being compensated for their efforts.[130]

With the Tegas Dusuns accepting Mat Salleh as their leader, his force raided the Tiawan villages, seizing property and killing some 30 people. This in turn prompted the Tiawan Dusuns to request protection from the Company, leading to their eventual submission to Company rule.[131] Beaufort visited Tambunan for the first time in 1899 to witness the Tiawan Dusuns' oath to the government. Besides being surprised by the fact that none spoke

125 CO874/262, 19/8/1898, Beaufort to the High Commissioner of Borneo in Singapore, pp. 568-569.
126 CO874/265, 12/2/1900, Copy of diary of a colonial officer to Beaufort on the occasion of the opening a new station in Tambunan (p. 542); Singh 2011: 198.
127 See Appendix A.
128 CO874/263, 29/1/1890, Beaufort to Richard Martin, accounting his first time in Keningau and Tambunan, p. 74, CO874/262, 19/8/1898, Beaufort to High Commissioner of Borneo in Singapore, p. 565.
129 BNBH, 17/5/1915, p. 96.
130 BNBH, 4/1/1899, p. 4.
131 BNBH, 16/6/1899, p. 186.

any Malay, Beaufort also noted 'habits and customs of both Keningau are equally filthy except that Tambunan drinks less and chews more', while finding native tobacco horrible.[132] F.W. Fraser, the district officer of Keningau, further noted that the Tiawan Dusuns were 'quiet and hardworking people' while Tegas Dusuns were prone to drinking and the Bajaos were 'all men of bad character and it is very doubtful that even if Mat Salleh himself had really desired to cooperate with the Government he would have been allowed to so'.[133] The Tegas Dusuns were singled out for scrutiny as they did not appear to behave in the manner that was expected of them: 'By what strange process of retrograde evolution did these pure-bred Chinese, though still maintaining their strict endogamous morality, degenerate in such a comparatively brief space of time to such low types as the Tegas?'[134] It was soon discovered that Mat Salleh was preparing for war, building a fort much like the one in Ranau, but this time fortifying the water supply as well with five more forts surrounding it manned by well-armed retainers, sentries and outposts. His men were equipped with rifles and were preventing the locals from paying the poll tax, while 'oppress[ing] his more timid neighbours, his place [being] a refuge of bad characters'.[135]

In response to these developments, a government station was built in Tambunan in October 1898. Mat Salleh was unhappy with the growing presence of the Company so close to his own territory and threatened to go to war once again. His attacks on Tiawan villages now resumed, prompting the Company to see the Tiawan Dusuns as loyal subjects. After Mat Salleh's force moved through Ulu Tuaran and Inanam raiding for ammunition the Company decided to act.[136]

The Company responded with a show of force, mounting counter-raids against the Tegas Dusuns. An expedition comprising 140 policemen and 500 carriers, led by Captain C.H. Harrington of the North Borneo constabulary, the acting superintendent of Sandakan, arrived on 1 January 1900. By 7 January, Mat Salleh had begun planning an elaborate strategy linking together four forts and ten fortified villages to beat them off.[137] Captain Harington's response was to burn down the fortified villages one by one.[138] The villages of

132 CO874/263, 29/1/1899, p. 74; 29/1/1899, p. 88. Both letters from Beaufort to Richard Martin.

133 BNBH, CO874/263, 17/4/1899, p. 592; BNBH, 17/5/1915, p. 97.

134 BNBH, 3/4/1923, p. 68.

135 CO874/262, 19/8/1898, p. 565; CO874/263, 29/1/1899, p. 79.

136 CO874/265, 22/12/1899, Minutes of a Council Meeting where Alexander Cook and Charles Raffles Flint was present, p. 74.

137 FO12/113, 11/1/1900, R.M. Little to the Senior Naval Officer of HMS *Raffles,* p. 82.

138 CO874/265, 12/2/1900, Clifford to Richard Martin, p. 367.

Latud, Sukong and Piassau were devastated by the fighting. After the attack on Piassau, all the Tegas Dusun villages raised white flags of surrender and the chief of Taboh, named Gunpoh, met with the district officer to discuss the terms of capitulation, which included the surrender of all firearms. After having waited for three days with no response from Gunpoh, who had returned to his village to inform his fellow chiefs, the Company began shelling the village of Taboh, only to find that it was strongly fortified. By now it was believed that Dato Shahbandar, Mat Salleh's uncle, had made his headquarters there. However, white flags were soon hoisted and on 16 January, Gunpoh himself swore allegiance to the Company with the remaining Tegas chiefs following suit the next day. The Tegas tribes had to pay compensation by handing over 25 head of cattle by 7 February, as well as pay a monetary fine of $250 by 4 March and provide free labour for the construction of a new blockhouse on the hill where Mat Sator's fort had once stood, who was one of Mat Salleh's right hand man. They also had to surrender all their firearms.[139]

By 19 March 1900, the Company had moved all its forces to Taboh, and was then able to go on the offensive against Mat Salleh's main fort. All of the rebel leader's forces were then concentrated in the main fort, which was vulnerable and could be approached from numerous directions via Taboh, Kelansatan and Kapian.[140] During this stage of the campaign the Dayaks were said to have been more efficient. They had managed to cut off the fort's water supply by damming the Sunsuran River. The officers of the Company were impressed by the fort's strength and well-planned earthworks, trenches and tunnels running through the ground that allowed Mat Salleh and his people to live underground, almost impervious to shell fire. It took eight days of heavy shelling until Mat Salleh himself was killed – shot in the head at midday on 31 January 1900.[141] His body was later identified by the Murut Chief Kansanat, as well as several Tiawan chiefs and Tiawan Dusuns. The losses suffered among Mat Salleh's followers were also quite high, with several members of Mat Salleh's family killed in the course of the fighting.[142]

139 CO874/265, 5/2/1900, Clifford to Fraser, p. 835.

140 BNBH, 17/5/1915, p. 98.

141 CO874/265, 14/2/1900, Clifford to Richard Martin, pp. 382-383.

142 Ninety-three of Mat Salleh's followers were killed, including his uncle, Dato Shahbandar, his principal lieutenant, Pangeran Linkong, his wife Dayang Bandang (who was believed to be a witch and who had been of great help to Mat Salleh), two other wives, a son and two daughters. There were also two Chinese who had joined the fight and around 200 Tegas Dusuns. Captain Harrington described the large number of corpses and noted that the stench was unbearable. See CO874/265, 12/2/1900, pp. 365-366, Clifford to Richard Martin. The Company's losses were much smaller, only

With Mat Salleh dead the rebellion was, to all intents and purposes, leaderless. In the months and years that followed the officials of the North Borneo Company would present their side of the story. The subsequent official account of the revolt and its suppression predictably cast the Company in a positive light while framing Mat Salleh and his followers in the most negative terms, as 'pirates,[143] 'rebels',[144] 'raiders' and 'murderers'[145] who were 'acting like idiots'.[146] Equally predictable was the manner in which the Company was presented as a benevolent entity aspiring to 'maintain friendly relations with Mat Salleh',[147] but had erred out of kindness when it 'adopted what proved later to be a fatal policy towards Mat Salleh'.[148] For the heads of the North Borneo Company the 'small war' which they had just waged was a necessary action culminating in (what they hoped would be) a lasting victory and an unforgettable lesson taught to the recalcitrant Bajaos:

> Except for the guerilla warfare carried on by some of the Bajaos among the hills to the north, the [Tambunan] expedition was successful also in teaching the Bajaos themselves a severe lesson for once, for in the other fights with Government, Mat Salleh and his Bajaos had suffered little themselves but their native allies, generally Dusuns, had borne the brunt of the fighting and paid heavily for it.[149]

two killed, one a Murut coolie, the other a Tuaran Dusun. The remaining captured Bajaos as well as those already in custody were tried by court martial on charges of treachery, but the proceedings smacked of a kangaroo court, involving informal discussion between Commandant Captain C.H. Harrington, Mr A.R. Dunlop and other officers with no defence being offered for those in the dock. All those tried in this fashion were subsequently executed. See CO874/265, 15/2/1900, Confidential letter from Clifford to Richard Martin titled 'The shooting of certain prisoners captured after the fall of Mat Saleh's strong-hold, by the orders of Captain Harington, the Commandant', p. 421.

143 The British Museum has several acquisitions from Sandakan, British North Borneo, donated by Henry Nicholas Ridley (1855-1956), the famous botanist and naturalist who established Malaya's rubber industry, in 1895-1896. The curator's comments were: 'Probably made by Borneo Malays. These were found under bushes by the river by me. They are probably Brunei work, and believed to have been some spoils of the *pirate* Mat Salleh. There was no village nor inhabitants within many miles.'

144 BNBH, 1/3/1898, p. 73.

145 CO874/256, 16-26/8/1895, Extracts from Treasurer General's Diary on Mat Sallay, p. 822; FO12/109, 7/5/1900, Clifford to Arthur Keyser, p. 28, HBM's Consul for Labuan; 9/5/1900, Report by R.M. Little for HBM's Consul for Borneo, p. 31. On Robert McEwen Little (1860-1905), see above, note 20.

146 BNBH, 1/9/1899, p. 270.

147 CO874/265, 16/1/1900, James R. Swettenham, Governor of Singapore (1899-1901), to R.M. Little, p. 389.

148 BNBH, 2/12/1903, p. 283.

149 BNBH, 17/5/1915, p. 98.

Lost in official Company accounts of the Mat Salleh Rebellion were the principal reasons and causes of the revolt. That the Company had extended its political-economic-legal authority across a land that was not theirs and that the natives of North Borneo were unwilling to submit to the rule of a foreign colonial power was left unstated in subsequent Company accounts. Instead, the Mat Salleh Rebellion was seen and understood in racial terms, as a clash between different racial groups, each of which were endowed with their own biological characteristics and particularities. A theme that popped up again and again in the official Company reports was the inherent 'savagery' of the native populations of Sandakan district, the Bajaos and Suluks, in particular. These latter could not – for reasons innate to their wild and savage nature – 'live quietly' and 'show loyalty to the Company'.[150]

Conclusion: 'Wild Natives' and 'Good Natives' – Racial Difference and the Logic of Racialized Warfare in North Borneo

The Mat Salleh Rebellion was a prolonged series of engagements spanning more than a decade from 1894 to 1905. It involved multiple raids followed by reprisals by the North Borneo Company, with brief periods of relative peace in between. During the initial stages of the conflict the Company was inclined to adopt a carrot-and-stick approach to achieve its goals with penalties, threats of imprisonment, displacement but also offers of future restoration of rights and property. In the years that followed, however, the Company would resort to more violent measures, guided by the belief that in such instances of 'small wars' fought against a less civilized opponent, 'the exemplary execution and spectacular massacres of rebels – whether routine or exceptional' was required, on the grounds that brute force was the only language that the natives understood'.[151] Following the death of Mat Salleh on 31 January 1900, the deputy governor upped the stakes in the contest for North Borneo when he issued the blanket order to 'hang all Bajaos caught with arms'.[152]

Over the next few years, the Company would continue to hunt down the remnants of Mat Salleh's forces. Soon after the capture of Mat Salleh's main fort, the Company's forces raided the settlement of Kudat (26 April 1900). By this time the fluent Malay speaker Hugh Clifford (1866-1941) had arrived and

150 CO874/265, 19/2/1900, Hugh Clifford to Acting High Commissioner of Singapore, p. 393.
151 Wagner 2018, p. 231.
152 CO874/265, 13/2/1900, Copy of minutes by A.R. Dunlop (magistrate-in-charge Darvel Bay) to Hugh Clifford, pp. 431-432.

was then the new governor (in office 1900-1901), while the Company officials were still trying to explain how and why so many of the Dusuns had chosen to lend their support to a rebellion that was on the brink of defeat. Robert McEwen Little (1860-1905), then Company Resident at Labuan (1898-1902), maintained that the Dusuns were a passive, docile race but argued that they had been corrupted by the Bajaos and Suluks, stating his belief that 'it is not difficult to persuade interior natives to join in any raid so long there is a prospect of plunder'.[153] Minor sporadic attacks continued, and it was not until 1905 that Mat Salleh's remaining followers surrendered.

What I have tried to show in this chapter is how the Mat Salleh Rebellion was seen and represented by the North Borneo Company officials in their reports. Almost universally, they presented this as a conflict between different races, each of which were thought to be distinct and endowed with particular characteristics, being neatly nested in a hierarchy of racial types. By mapping out the different groups involved in the conflict we can see how each 'race' was given an appointed role as the conflict developed: At the very top of this racial hierarchy were the Europeans who were seen as the most 'civilized', implying that the efforts of the North Borneo Chartered Company to develop the territory for their own economic gains was part of a civilizing mission. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the founders of the North Borneo Company saw themselves and their Company as part of a larger civilizational project, identifying themselves as part of a 'Christian, peace-loving, peace-making, commercial Empire' ruling vast swathes of Asia in the name of progress, profit and Western civilization.[154] At the very bottom of the racial hierarchy were the Bajaos and Suluks who were doubly damned by virtue of being both Asians and Muslims. Caught in between were communities like the Dusuns, Dayaks, Sikhs and Pathans. These were seen as docile and pliable, qualities which meant that they could be turned into productive subjects of the Company provided the Bajao-Suluk threat was removed.

The racialization of the Mat Salleh Rebellion also meant that at no point were the complaints of the Bajao and Suluk peoples taken seriously by the Company. Seen as throwbacks to an earlier era of native piracy and misrule, the viewpoint of these communities and the appeals of their leaders like Mat Salleh were largely ignored. The outcome of the rebellion was not only the defeat of Mat Salleh and the marginalization of the Bajao and Suluk communities, but also the entrenchment of the logic of racial difference in North Bornean (and later Sabahan) society. Henceforth, racialized colonial

153 FO12/109, 9/5/1900, p. 31.
154 Medhurst 1885: 33.

capitalism would become the operative norm in the management and development of the colony.

Today the Mat Salleh Rebellion continues to be recounted in the post-colonial Malaysian state of Sabah. Many Sabahans celebrate Mat Salleh as one of their state's first anti-colonial freedom fighters, and his life story has entered their collective postcolonial imaginary, facilitated in part by the release of Tuaran-born film director Deddy M. Borhan's (1944-present), film *Mat Salleh Pahlawan Sabah* (Mat Salleh Warrior of Sabah) (1983). A memorial stone was erected at Kampung Tibabar near Tambunan in 1999 marking the location of Mat Salleh's fort and the place where he met his death in 1900. This was later developed into a Mat Salleh Memorial Park where his photograph and some of his weapons and military paraphernalia were put on display. On 3 July 2017, in nearby Kampung Kapayan Lama, Tambunan, a museum dedicated to his principal lieutenant, Mat Sator, was also opened by the Deputy Chief Minister of Sabah, Joseph Pairin Kitingan. Popular myths surrounding the man continue to live on. Indeed, some still maintain the belief that Mat Salleh was never killed in 1900 but had managed to escape due to his supernatural invulnerability to weapons.[155]

Equally enduring has been the legacy of racialized politics left by the North Borneo Company. Sabah's internal politics today is one where political parties are founded and run on the basis of ethnic-racial representation. At the same time the different communities of Sabah continue to understand and re-present themselves in terms of essentialized constructions of identity and difference. Mat Salleh may be seen as a hero, especially among the Bajaos and Suluks, but his appeal went much wider than this. It has to be remembered that in the course of his rebellion against the North Borneo Company there were several instances when his revolt encompassed the needs and aspirations of others outside his own Bajao and Suluk community. This demonstrates that the logic of racial difference, so instrumental to the North Borneo Company's colonial enterprise, was often undermined from within by the native Other/s who resisted such neat binaries and compartmentalization. Žižek has argued that we 'can effectively show how with every new historical epoch of the struggle for emancipation, a different understanding and practice of dialectics emerges'.[156] In the case of the Mat Salleh Rebellion there remains the need to understand how this rebellion provided not merely an effective challenge to a foreign colonial power, but also a moment when the compartmentalizing logic of racialized colonial capitalism was undermined from within.

155 Low 2011: 220.
156 Žižek 2016: 379.

Appendix: The Peace Pact of Kampung Palatan, Menggatal

In the evening Mat Salleh sent in five rifles as agreed upon and a present of a parang each to Mr. Cowie and the Governor.

On the morning of the 23rd the following document was drawn up and sent to Mat Salleh for his signature. Pangeran Kahar was bearer and witness:

TO MAHOMED SALLEH

In consideration of your having submitted to the Government, the Government hereby grants you the following:

i. You and your followers are pardoned for levying war against the Government, but people who have escaped from Gaol, and committed other offences, are not pardoned for such offences.
ii. Sabandar and Malam will be released at once from Sandakan Gaol if still there.
iii. People turned out of R. [River/Sungai] Inanam by the Government may return and live there, but as there are some who might give trouble, they will not be allowed to return till O.K. Serail and any other Government headman, and the District Officer give permission.
iv. Mat Salleh will be allowed to live at Tambunan, or elsewhere in the interior, except on the rivers Sugut and Labuk. The Government hopes he will use his influence to induce the tribes there to follow the Government.
v. Mat Salleh at the request of the Government will always assist in arresting any [bringing in those] required for any offence.
vi. Mat Salleh will frequently supply information to the Government as to his proceedings.
vii. If Mat Salleh comes to the coast he must report himself to the District Officer.

[Signed]
W.C. COWIE
L.P. BEAUFORT
MAT SALLEH
DATO SAHAK

Witness to above marks
SI MOH, Serang, [HMS] *Petrel*

(Source: *British North Borneo Herald*, 2 May 1898)

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4 The Franco-Siamese War and the Russo-Japanese War

Two Colonial Wars and the Political Appropriation of the Idea of Race in Absolutist Siam

David M. Malitz

Abstract
The adoption of the ambiguous yet politically powerful idea of 'race' in Siam during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was shaped in a contradictory manner by two colonial wars. In the aftermath of the Franco-Siamese War of 1893 the idea of a Thai 'race' was promoted to differentiate the populations under Siamese and French rule. After the Russo-Japanese War and increasing criticism from an emergent Siamese middle class, the kingdom's ruling class embraced Orientalist stereotypes to argue against the suitability of constitutional governance for the Siamese due to their being 'Asians'. In consequence, before the Siamese Revolution of 1932, the elite of the absolute monarchy argued simultaneously that the Siamese were racially different from their neighbours but fundamentally alike to all 'Orientals'.

Keywords: Franco-Siamese War, Paknam, Russo-Japanese War, Siam, *chat*, French Indochina

Introduction

That in Southeast Asia the kingdom of Siam alone escaped formal colonization is well-known and remains a central trope within the country's official nationalism. This outcome was, however, far from certain in the late nineteenth century. In April 1893 competition between Siam and France over the control of the Lao principalities east of the Mekong River resulted in a series of skirmishes. They were decided in France's favour

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in July 1893 after French gunships had broken through Siamese defences and moored in the immediate vicinity of the royal palace in Bangkok. In a subsequent treaty, King Chulalongkorn (1853-1910, r. 1868-1910) was forced to make territorial concessions as well as to extend consular jurisdiction to France's Asian subjects. As war was never officially declared and the overall scope of the fighting remained small, this Franco-Siamese conflict is commonly not considered a war. Rather, it is euphemistically referred to as the Paknam Incident, named after the location of the naval skirmish deciding its outcome. Yet it was referred to as such in the French press and considered one by the British foreign secretary, Lord Salisbury.[1] Its inclusion in this volume is further justified for its being as a watershed moment in Siamese or Thai intellectual history. The granting of consular jurisdiction to subjects of French Indochina in the conflict's aftermath forced the Siamese elite to come to terms with the political implications of the modern idea of race. A supposed racial identity linking a large percentage of the Siamese population to the now French-administered eastern bank of the Mekong justified the extension of consular jurisdiction to them. This link had been severed through the creation of a new Thai identity uniting populations previously differentiated as Thai and Lao in Siam.

But the French word *race* was and remains an ambiguous term – just as the English one spelled identically. Arguably, it was its ambiguity that made the term so powerful and useful to the French colonizers. *Race* referred to ethnic groups or nations thus making it possible to argue that the Thai of Siam or Siamese were distinct from the Laos and Khmer. But it also referred to much larger populations distinguishable by different phenotypes, especially skin colour. In the latter interpretation all of the people of Asia were similar and simultaneously different from and inferior to the Europeans. This interpretation of race and the discourse of Orientalism, which became closely associated with it over the course of the nineteenth century, justified colonial projects and the unequal treatment of European citizens and colonial subjects in Asia, most importantly in regard to political participation.

In the early twentieth century, when their independence had become assured, the Siamese elite realized that the very same arguments could be wielded to justify the ancien régime at a time when the absolutist state was increasingly regarded as an anachronism by an emergent middle class. This line of argument would, however, became increasingly challenged in the wake of another colonial war. While having been waged far from Siam's

1 Le XIXe siècle 1893: 1; La Croix 1893a: 1; Klein 1968: 119.

shores, the Russo-Japanese War over the control of the Korean Peninsula was widely reported in the press and even shown in Bangkok's very first cinema. Embracing a shared Asian racial identity, the new Siamese bourgeoisie interpreted the Japanese victory over Russia as proof that Asians were fit for constitutional government and that such self-determination even made the status of a great power possible.

The Birth and Meanings of 'Race' in France

The idea of *race* was central to the legitimization of the French colonial project in Southeast Asia. Despite this importance, the term remained ill-defined and acquired a range of meanings over several centuries. But from the very beginning it was a political one prescribing the boundaries of legitimate claims to political power and economic resources.

Race entered the French language in the late fifteenth century via the Italian *razza*, initially referring to favourable qualities of breeds of animals such as warhorses.[2] It then was applied to the lineages or dynasties of monarchs, who like the horses were thought to have acquired certain superior characteristics through birth. By the mid-sixteenth century, the usage of the term had broadened and was applied to noble families as well. Their *races*, lineages, distinguished them not only from the common folk but also from newly ennobled commoners. Thus, *race* expressed a subjective claim to superiority, when the established nobility's privileges became objectively threatened by new nobles created by kings to serve the emerging absolutist state with their military and administrative skills.[3] Henri de Boulainvilliers's (1658-1722) famous history of the French nobility, which was published posthumously in 1734, traced the French nobility back to the Frankish conquerors of Gaul against this background. Importantly, in this history, *race* has acquired a new layer of meaning. Individual noble and royal lineages – dynasties – remained *races* and were used synonymously with *maison*[*s*] and *famille*[*s*].[4] But by virtue of their common descent, the nobility as a whole was also thought of as *race*. The term therefore became also a synonym for *nation* as a political collective.[5]

2 This oldest meaning is the only one which remains in use in the present. Today, the expression *race siamoise* refers, of course, exclusively to cats.

3 Boulle 2003: 12.

4 Boulainvilliers 1732: 2, 25, 33, 72, 83, 98, 110, 146.

5 Ibid.: 16-17, 47, 66-67, 169, 335.

The seventeenth century had not only seen the eclipse of the nobility by the absolute monarchy, but also the beginning of French colonialism with the establishment of plantation colonies in the Caribbean as well as the Compagnie française pour le commerce des Indes orientales (1664-1769).[6] And through travelogues written by Frenchmen such as the physician François Bernier (1620-1688), who had served at the Moghul court, the reading public back in France acquired new knowledge of the world. François Bernier's *Nouvelle division de la terre, par les différentes espèces ou races d'homme qui l'habitent*, published in 1684 following his return to France, stands out because it is today recognized as the first classification of the world's population into distinct *races* based on physiological differences and skin colour. These *races* are distinct from the *nations* of the world as they cut across political and religious boundaries. Importantly this categorization did not yet imply a general ranking of the different *races* nor their unbridgeable difference. And interestingly, the Siamese or at least a part of the kingdom's inhabitants are explicitly mentioned as being in the same race as the French for being 'véritablement blancs'.[7]

The eighteenth century saw the Enlightenment project of the categorization of cosmos extended to humanity. Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778), whose famous classifications are known today for the introduction of the binomial nomenclature of organisms, as well as Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840), the founder of the discipline of physical anthropology, wrote in Latin of varieties (*varietates*) and assumed the common origin of all humans.[8] But against the background of the Enlightenment's rejection of the Christian cosmology, the flourishing of the slave trade enriching French port cities and European military superiority, which became increasingly distinct following the second siege of Vienna, *race* acquired a new interpretation.[9] It now acquired the meaning of inherited and definite differences between *races*. This included the advent of outrightly polygenic origins as, for example, Voltaire's (1694-1778) *Traité de métaphysique* (1734) that does not discuss mere races or varieties but of different *espèces d'hommes*. Yet, *nations* and *peuples* are used as synonyms for these different species as well.[10] With the ancien régime being legitimized by the Church, however, monogenic

6 Aldrich 1996: 13-14. The most important French plantation colony in the Caribbean was Saint-Domingue (post-1804, Haiti). Its foundation can be traced to the 1659 establishment of a settlement on the island of Tortuga.

7 Bernier 1684: 134-136.

8 Linnaeus 1748: 3; Blumenbach 1795: ix.

9 Aldrich 1996: 13-34.

10 Voltaire 1911: 137-138.

classifications of humanity remained the norm in France. Georges-Louis Leclerc Buffon's (1707-1788) influential and widely read *Histoire naturelle*, for example, still argued in contrast to Voltaire that there was a sole *espèce d'homme* and only individual varieties.[11] The 1749 chapter on the *Variétés dans l'espèce humaine* used *race*, *nation* and *peuple* as synonyms.[12] Naturalist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1829) likewise wrote of human *variétés*, but additionally discussed the emergence of races through inheritance of traits among, for example, monkeys.[13]

The nineteenth-century conception of human diversity, which would provide the ostensibly scientific background to French-Siamese relations in the age of imperialism was based on the natural history *Le règne animal* (1817) by the naturalist Georges Cuvier (1769-1832).[14] Written against the background of the reintroduction of slavery in French plantation colonies and the rise of romantic nationalism in Europe, the chapter on the *variétés l'espèce humaine* or *races* is simultaneously a natural scientific and political one. Three *races* with different skin colour and geographic origin are introduced, whose biological differences are linked to degrees of civilization and the natural history conflating biological and historical processes. Drawing on philological scholarship of the time, *Le règne animal* argues that these biological *races* can be subdivided into different *branches* or *rameaux* (analogues to language). But he then proceeded to use *race* as a synonym for both phenotypes and nations or peoples (*peuples*). Among the three large *races* in which humanity can be subdivided, according to the author, only the most beautiful – the white or Caucasian – race was said to be able to achieve high degrees of civilization. The people of the *race mongole* of the Orient are not only characterized by their yellow skin, but also the fact that their civilizations had remained static despite having built great empires.[15] Here, Cuvier provides a crucial linkage between the distinctively modern idea of biological race with the much older trope of Oriental despotism.[16]

Cuvier's tripartite division of humanity was maintained by Joseph Arthur de Gobineau (1816-1882) in his infamous *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (1853). The work advanced *race* as the driving force behind global history likewise conflating biology with history. The text conflated all terms previously introduced into the discussion of human difference.

11 Buffon 1844: 218.
12 See, for example, the case of the 'Tartares' in Buffon 1844: 171-172.
13 Lamarck 1830: 348-357.
14 Cuvier 1817: 94-98.
15 Ibid.: 29, 46, 49, 52, 95, 97, 144, 155, 204, 213.
16 Said 2003: 206.

Races described at once the three large populations of the world as well as mixtures between them, their branches (*rameaux*) as well as *peuples* and *nations.* Simultaneously, the term was a synonym for *variétés* of populations and of *familles*.[17]

By the time of the clashes over the control of the Mekong River and the Lao principalities on its eastern bank, *race* had thus acquired a wide range of meanings. And in stark contrast to its increasing acceptance as a scientific concept, it had become progressively vague. As one exception to this overall trend, the Belgian geographer Jean-Baptiste-Julien d'Omalius d'Halloy's (1783-1875) *Des races humaines, ou éléments d'ethnographie* (1845) stands out. The work addresses the classification of the world's population much more systematically by proposing the subdivision of humanity successively by *races*, *rameaux*, *familles* and *peuples*.[18]

The Discovery of Oriental Despotism in Asia

The trope of Oriental despotism with its roots in classical antiquity was rediscovered in eighteenth-century Europe at the very time when the idea of a variety of human *races* was conceived. Early modern Europe had not associated the large Asian empires with a stereotypical tyrannical form of government in the Orient. This trope was introduced in Charles de Montesquieu's (1689-1755) *De l'esprit des lois* (1748), which developed an ideal typical form of despotism located to the east in Europe (including Russia) and contrasted it to the monarchy of Europe.[19] For his work Montesquieu draws on the early travel literature, including the observations about Siam by Louis XIV's (1638-1715, r. 1643-1715) envoy to the kingdom, Simon de la Loubère (1642-1729).[20] The travelogue identified Siam as an Oriental despotic state, but racial characteristics had no bearing on this form of government for the envoy. *Race* is used in the text exclusively for lineages of kings as well as the breeds of animals, while different ethnicities are referred to as *nations* or *peuples*.[21]

Furthermore, La Loubère's observations are clearly meant to be read as advice for his absolutist master. As the envoy stresses, the lack of a strong

17 Gobineau 1884: 38-39, 71, 150, 214, 218-223, 242, 267, 290.
18 Omalius d'Halloy 1845: 4.
19 Osterhammel 2010: 274-278.
20 Montesquieu 1834: II, 211, 214.
21 La Loubère 1700: 16-17, 28-30, 88, 110, 113, 216-217, 248, 296, 310, 321, 337, 395, 415.

and self-confident aristocracy in fact weakens the Siamese king rather than being a sign of his strength. Constant fear of their master and mutual distrust makes all advice offered by the ruler's subjects unreliable.[22] This argument was extended and generalized in *De l'esprit des lois*.[23] Likewise, Montesquieu saw despotic rule as a reason for a lack of commercial prosperity.[24] Based on these and other writings, Anne Robert Jacques Turgot's (1727-1781) lecture *Tableau philosophique des progrès successifs de l'esprit humain*, delivered at the Sorbonne two years later, could then in broad strokes link the idea of Oriental despotism to the Orient's ostensive 'static' nature and lack of 'progress'.[25] This view of Asia could then be incorporated by George Cuvier into his description of the *race mongole* in his natural history.

Traditional Views on Human Diversity in Siam

The political economy of the kingdom of Siam in the mid-nineteenth century differed in two important regards from the monarchies of early modern Europe and the continent's modern nation states. First, the combination of ample fertile land and a small population had always made manpower the most sought resource, and not land. The spoils of war in central Southeast Asia were therefore first of all people, who were forcibly migrated closer to the victor's capital. Second, the capitals of Ayutthaya and (after its destruction and the short interregnum of Thonburi) Bangkok were major regional trading hubs. Communities of foreign traders were encouraged to settle in the capitals and their leaders ennobled. Furthermore, foreigners offering military or other skills lacking in Siam had always been welcomed to build their own ethnic enclaves around the royal capital and their leaders integrated into the nobility. Both resulted in an ethnically heterogenous population increasing the prestige of the Siamese kings, who styled themselves as future Buddhas and meritorious Buddhist universal emperors (*cakkavatti*).[26] Forced assimilation was therefore never envisaged.

In Siam, language (*phasa* ภาษา) served to not only differentiate between these different communities of foreigners, but also to refer to them collectively as the people of '12 languages' (or, sometimes, '40 languages').

22 Ibid.: 314-315.

23 Montesquieu 1834: I, 42-43, 50-52, 76, 88-89, 92, 95, 105-106, 116-117, 158, 160, 166, 169-180, 202-203, 216; II, 29-30, 46, 81, 89, 151, 177, 179.

24 Montesquieu 1834: I, 149, 167-168.

25 Turgot 2011.

26 Baker and Phongpaichit 2017: 203, 210.

Another term used to refer to the different communities was *phet* (เพศ), which means 'gender' in modern Thai and stems from the Pali *vesa* for 'dress'.[27] Both expressions point to the understanding of ethnicity as something acquired or learned rather than an inherited and immutable identity. Nevertheless, not all communities were considered equal. The illiterate and animist tribal communities in the highlands of mainland Southeast Asia were literally called 'slaves' (*kha* ข้า).[28] The modern term for 'nation' or a 'people', *chat* (ชาติ), in contrast came into usage only in the early nineteenth century, when the number of Western merchants increased. *Chat* derives from the Pali and Sanskrit for 'birth' (*jati*). Originally, such as in the Buddhist cosmology of the Three Worlds (*Traiphum*) re-edited in the late eighteenth century, it referred to incarnations of individuals, in particular those of the Buddha.[29] But in the work's chapter on the self-creation of the cosmos adopted from Brahmin sources, *chat* is also used in the sense of 'caste'. It refers to large groups of people of whom some enjoyed privileged access to power and resources due to their birth, such as *khatiya chat* (ขัตติยชาติ), the nobility, and *phram chat* (พราหมณ์ชาติ), the Brahmins.[30] A further term to refer to different groups of people is *chao* (ชาว), which remains in use today. It could be and can be used to refer to occupational groups, such as 'farmers', *chao na* (ชาวนา), or 'officials', *chao phanakngan* (ชาวพนักงาน),[31] as well as to populations of certain locations, such as the 'royal capital', *chao phra nakhon* (ชาวพระนคร), or the continent inhabited by humans according to the Buddhist cosmology, *chao chomphu thawip* (ชาวชมพูทวีป).[32]

The population of the kingdom's central region in the lower Chao Phraya basin then and now were known as Thai, even though the spelling was slightly different. In contrast, the populations of northern and north-eastern Siam were known as Lao. This linguistic differentiation would become a threat to Bangkok's claim of suzerainty over its northern and north-eastern possessions at the end of the nineteenth century after France had acquired the Lao principalities on the eastern bank of the Mekong River and claimed all Lao descended from their territories as *protégés*, that is, entitled to French protection.

27 Koizumi 2006: 69.
28 Davisakd Puaksom 2003: 113-115.
29 Thammapricha 1992: 60, 433.
30 Ibid.: 68.
31 Ibid.: 435, 460.
32 Ibid.: 463, 483.

The Beginning of French-Siamese Relations

French-Siamese relations can be traced back to the late seventeenth century, when two French missions travelled to the court of Ayutthaya. They had been enticed by the Greek adventurer Constantine Phaulkon (1647-1688), who had risen in the court bureaucracy of King Narai (1633-1688, r. 1656-1688). The king's interest in European affairs and tolerance of missionary activities was misread as an invitation to more French involvement and as a sign of a possible conversion of the king and country. They formed an attractive powerbase for the king as they lacked local support and were therefore more reliable than local noblemen. As one of them, Phaulkon invited more French involvement in Siam to support himself in the foreseeable succession struggle. Two French missions did indeed travel to Ayutthaya and left a small military force behind. When the succession struggle materialized, however, the small detachment of French soldiers could not influence the outcome and the adventurer was executed by his Siamese opponent. There was not, however, a general resentment against Europeans in Siam. The Dutch quickly gained trading rights and even the French missionaries continued their – largely unsuccessful – activities.[33]

France would return to Southeast Asia only during the reign of Napoleon III (1808-1873, r. 1851-1870) following the Vienna Congress, which saw the restoration of some of colonial possessions of the ancien régime. France's return to the region occurred rather naturally. At the time, the Dutch and Spanish had become firmly entrenched in their respective possessions in archipelagic Southeast Asia, while in 1826 and 1842 the British had acquired lower Burma and Hong Kong, respectively. The history of French involvement in the region including Siam was well known and missionary activities had continued. In fact, the first French report from the Southeast Asian kingdom was probably a letter by the French bishop in Bangkok printed in an 1838 edition of a missionary magazine. The terminology used in it is still rather traditional with the main difference being made between the Christian and non-Christian populations, even though one reference is made to a *race cochinchinoise*.[34] His successor, Bishop Pallegoix (1805-1862), wrote two volumes about the Southeast Asian kingdom.[35] While *race* can be

33 Baker and Phongpaichit 2017: 160-172.

34 Courvezy 1839: 522.

35 Pallegoix 1854: 66, 74, 76, 80, 86, 89, 101, 102, 106, 118-9, 123, 124, 128, 136, 146, 156, 173 176, 187, 195, 205, 212, 223, 270, 273, 286, 315, 317, 318, 348, 347, 350, 352, 361, 377, 379, 381, 383, 389, 424; Pallegoix 1853: 4, 9, 10, 20, 32.

found to describe the Siamese or Thai, the bishop mostly writes of *nation*(*s*). *Race* is most likely not understood as a biological term and most certainly not understood to describe immutable differences as the bishop counts populations in 'souls' (*âmes*). The missionary refers to the monarch as a despot, but this is more a description of his understanding of the Siamese system of government rather than a moral denouncement of the king as a person. After all, the bishop had a close though not always easy relationship with King Mongkut.

First Changes to the Siamese Ethnography

The Siamese conception of human difference changed in the late eighteenth century against the double backdrop of an even larger dependence on overseas trade and the traumatic experience of the destruction of Ayutthaya by an army from present-day Burma and the subsequent period of unrest and famine. In contrast to early chronicles with their focus on rulers alone, historical texts written after the fall of Ayutthaya indicate the emergence of 'politicized ethnic identities' through the use of ethnonyms.[36] By the early nineteenth century *chat* had acquired in essence its modern meaning as a general term for such a racial or ethnic identity. This is evident from a series of inscriptions and murals about people of different *chat* in the Phra Chetuphon temple complex in central Bangkok, which uses this new term.[37] They probably date back to a restoration in the early decades of the nineteenth century.[38]

Furthermore, in addition to the Catholic missionaries already present, Protestant missionaries had begun to arrive in Bangkok as well. With trained doctors among them, they attempted to prove the truth of Christianity with their superior scientific knowledge. This also meant disproving the very Buddhist cosmology on which the Siamese monarchy rested. And at times they also intervened on behalf of their flock.[39] In contrast, while aware of and writing about biological race in their publications, they did not argue for fundamental differences between various human races.[40] Arguably, until the late nineteenth century religion was a greater concern to Siam's ruling

36 Reeder 2017: 88.
37 Fine Arts Department 1964: 83-104.
38 Dhani Nivat 1933: 144-146, 152.
39 Terwiel 2011: 71-72.
40 See, for example, Bradley 1853: 21-24.

elite than race. This may be deduced from the early-nineteenth-century story of Lady Nophamat, which offered a new, hybrid ethnography. The text includes a list of the different peoples – or nations – of the world combing the old *phasa* with *chat*: *chat phasa tang tang* (ชาติภาษาต่างๆ).[41] On this list, the inhabitants of Christian countries in the 'West' are named with the prefix *farang*, an old term used for Europeans with Persian roots. *Khaek*, likewise, was an established term to refer to Muslims and is now similarly used as a prefix. *Phram*, Brahmin, appears to have extended its meaning and was used to refer to non-Muslims from South Asia. The remaining Buddhist countries, including China and Japan, do not receive a prefix. Two specific peoples demonstrate the viability of this interpretation of the list with its prefixes. The Muslim Cham of southern Vietnam and Cambodia are labelled *khaek*, while the Buddhist Singhalese of Sri Lanka do not have a prefix. The text also identifies as distinct from the Thai a large number of people living in Siam, including several Lao ethnicities. A dispatch by a high-ranking official on campaign in northern Siam in the early 1850s shows that these ethnicities were not considered equal. In it, the Lao are chastised for sharing a 'character' different and inferior to that of the Thai for their alleged lack of patriotism and respect for noble birth.[42]

Nangsue sadaeng kitchanukit (The book explaining various things), which was first published in 1867, is recognized as the first book published under Siamese patronage. It refers to the divisions of mankind into different races by skin colour (but only fleetingly) and it does not attach much importance to it.[43] The main theme is the reconciliation of Buddhism with modern science by refuting traditional cosmology but maintaining the law of *kharma* to explain social differences and, thereby, the legitimacy of the Buddhist monarchy.

It is evident that by the 1880s, ideas of scientific racism had become introduced into the kingdom's elite, some of whom had already studied in Europe. When King Kalākaua (1836-1891, r. 1874-1891) of Hawai'i visited the royal capital in 1881, King Chulalongkorn remarked that the two people were 'related' as the Siamese were 'partly Malay'.[44] A similar view was expressed in the possibly first discussion of scientific racism in a local publication. An 1885 article in the weekly journal *Wachirayan Wiset* (to which mainly foreign educated members of the elite contributed) introduced a fivefold

41 N.A. 1962: 3.
42 Kromluang Wongsa 1916: 113-114.
43 Thiphakorawong 1872: 113.
44 Armstrong 1904: 126.

division of humanity into races using the terms *cham phuak* (จำพวก) and *chat manut* (ชาติมนุษย์) for *race* and identifying the Siamese as being of the Malay rather than the Mongol race.[45] But by the early twentieth century, the more popular threefold differentiation between white, yellow and black races appears to have become accepted in Siam, as is seen in the writings of Thianwan (1842-1915), a well-known commentator and advocate of modernization.[46]

King Chulalongkorn's son and successor King Vajiravudh (1880-1925, r. 1910-1925), who had been educated in Britain from a young age, engaged with criticism of the absolutist state through an official nationalism. In his writings published under a penname he employed the division of humanity into the three races advanced by Cuvier combined with Orientalist stereotypes refuting the readiness of the Siamese for political participation as they were 'Asiatics' or 'Orientals'.[47] In 1928, the bureaucrat Wichit Mattra published with Lak Thai the first history of the Thai nation or race (*chat*) in Thai. Recognized officially with a national price and drawing heavily on a publication by an American missionary, Wichit Mattra argued that the Thai belonged to the 'yellow-skinned race' that had first emerged in the Altai Mountains but had then split into different branches, such as the Thai, Japanese and Chinese.[48]

The Advent of French Imperialism in Southeast Asia

Diplomatic relations between France and Siam were established with the signing of an unequal treaty in 1856, when the consul to Shanghai stopped in Bangkok on his way to China.[49] During the following half century, French colonial policy would be informed not so much by tangible economic interests but driven by domestic political competition and the need to exploit foreign conflicts for political capital as well as nationalistic competition with Great Britain.[50] Due to a lack of naval resources as well as instability in Europe, Southeast Asia was not a major foreign policy concern of the Second Empire. So, when the explorer and naturalist Henri Mouhot (1826-1861), who would popularize Angkor in the West, set out on his journey to Siam and

45 Wachirayan Wiset 1885: 183-184.
46 Thianwan 1979 [1906]: 146-147.
47 See, for example, Asvabahu 1914: 1, 13, 16.
48 Wichit Matra 1967: 3, 9.
49 Aldrich 1996: 73-76.
50 Ibid.: 19, 26.

Cambodia, he had to rely on British funding for his journey. In his travelogue, he employed the modern and ambiguous if not contradictory vocabulary of *race*.[51] The Siamese were a race of their own, which belong to the larger category of the *race mongole* or *race jaune*. But the term was also used as a synonym for *tribu* (tribe), *nation* or *peuple*. Thus the Siamese as a *race* were distinct from that of the Lao and Cambodians. Their national character was shaped by the experience of Oriental despotism. This government remained, however, comparable to a European one, namely that of Russia, a power hostile to France at that time.

An opportunity for a French show of force in the region and an entrance into imperial competition with Britain in East Asia came with the Second Opium War (1856-1860). In August 1858, a sizable French naval detachment left China and moved south to Annam, where some years earlier French missionaries had been executed despite their being under French protection. The flotilla easily took the port of Danang but was unable to reach the capital of Hue further inland. However, the main port of Cochinchina, Saigon, was captured. In a treaty signed in 1862, the emperor of Annam ceded the city and the three eastern provinces of Cochinchina as well as Annam's claims to Cambodia to France. As Siam considered Cambodia a vassal, both countries found themselves now in competition over the kingdom. A Franco-Siamese border emerged with the establishment of a protectorate over Cambodia the following year. The Franco-Siamese Treaty of 1867 settled the status quo with Siam, acknowledging the protectorate and Siam gaining the two western provinces of Cambodia in return. Five years later, the local French official unilaterally annexed the western provinces of Cochinchina, uniting the Southern part of Vietnam under French administration.[52]

Le royaume de Siam was published following the Siamese participation in the universal exhibition in Paris in 1867 and was mainly compiled by the Siamese consul and commissioner for the Siamese pavilion. Here one can find a racial classification of the Siamese inspired by Jean Julien d'Omalius d'Halloy, arguing that the *peuple* of the Siamese belonged to the Indochinese branch of the *race jaune*. Simultaneously, the book argued that the Lao and Cambodians were distinct people from the Siamese with the latter not being tributaries to the Siamese any longer, following the Franco-Siamese treaty mentioned above.[53]

51 Mouhot 1868: 9-12, 113, 152-154, 210, 212, 232, 296.
52 Aldrich 1996: 76-80.
53 Gréhan 1869: 6, 127.

The continuing need to pacify the new French possessions in Southeast Asia as well as the failure of the colonial administration to generate sufficient revenue resulted in the increasing unwillingness of the government in Paris to support the adventure in Southeast Asia. In June 1866, an expedition departed from Saigon organized by the Mekong Exploration Commission established by the colonial authorities. Captain Ernest Doudart de Lagrée (1823-1868) and Lieutenant Francis Garnier (1839-1873) were tasked to find a direct connection on the Mekong between Saigon and the promising markets of southern China.[54] This objective clearly shaped the observation made about Siamese suzerainty over the Lao principalities north of Cambodia. It was considered both unpopular and illegal, as the principalities owed allegiance to Annam alone.[55] But the published report of the journey also made a moral argument drawing on the trope of Oriental despotism by recounting a long history of a 'tyrannie des Siamois', exercised over the Lao population. In the present, it was observed that the 'despotisme des Siamoise' forced people to take refuge in the principality of Luang Prabang.[56] Simultaneously, the text used the language of race to describe Indochina's populations employing the vocabulary introduced by Cuvier. The distinct *races* of the *race siamoise*, *laotienne*, *chinois* and *annamese* were all *rameaux* of the *race mongole*.[57] They remained simultaneously *nations* – but race could also refer to a 'savage' tribe or a dynasty.[58] Departing from Cuvier, the *race cambodgienne*, now under Siamese and French rule, is considered as a *race autochthone* that was later mixed with Mongol and Oceanic 'blood'.[59] Siamese suzerainty over the lands of interest to the authorities in Saigon was thus rejected on legal-historical, racial-political and moral grounds, whereby racial identity was closely bound up with the nature of Siamese rule.

With easy access to the markets of southern China via the Mekong River having failed to materialize, no support from Paris for more assertive actions along the Mekong was forthcoming for over a decade. This would only change in the 1880s following the French defeat of 1871 and the foundation of the Third Republic. With backing by the home government, Annam became a French protectorate in 1883-1884. Tonkin followed in 1887. The same year saw the creation of the Indochinese Union governed by a French

54 Keay 2005: 289-290, 294.
55 Ibid.: 296-297.
56 Garnier 1873: 143, 322, 483.
57 Ibid.: 53, 112, 130, 328, 399.
58 Ibid.: 7, 114, 135, 238-240, 320, 330, 346, 350, 359, 376-377, 465, 570.
59 Ibid.: 110.

governor-general of Indochina.[60] The need to settle the western border of the union's territories intensified the competition with the Kingdom of Siam over the Lao principalities east of the Mekong and the control of the river itself. In response to Siamese inroads east of the Mekong as well as the British conquest of upper Burma and the establishment of a consulate in the city of Chiang Mai in northern Siam, the explorer Auguste Pavie (1847-1925) was chartered with two missions. He explored the region north of Cambodia and established a French consulate in Luang Prabang.

The goal of these expeditions was to establish legal claims to the regions east of the Mekong on the behalf of the French government. A mission, which ultimately failed, as Auguste Pavie himself had to acknowledge, when later appointed minister in Bangkok.[61] In the aftermath of the Franco-Siamese war, Pavie published an extensive book series on his journeys, which made the case for the colonial project and the continuation of an aggressive policy towards Siam. It describes Siamese officials as dishonest in their dealings with the French as well as oppressive against the populations east of the Mekong, yet incapable of protecting them from marauders. French rule was therefore welcomed on the eastern bank.[62] In the series, *race* is used as a synonym for populations ranging from small *tribus* to the *race thaïe*, consisting of several *peuples*, including the Lao and Siamese. *Nation*, in contrast, is reserved for Europeans, thereby creating a hierarchy from tribe over people to nation – all of which were simultaneously races.[63] There appear to be no references to a Mongol or yellow race in the singular, but Orientalist stereotypes are applied to the *races asiatiques*; one can also find a reference to 'Mongol' facial features.[64]

The Franco-Siamese War or Paknam Incident

Against the backdrop of ongoing French-British colonial competition and the French-Siamese competition east of the Mekong, late 1892 saw the rise of a coalition of forces within and outside the French parliament, the *parti colonial*, strongly in favour of colonial expansion.[65] To make their case and to pressure the government, the colonial press revived the claim that by

60 Aldrich 1996: 80-81; Tuck 1995: 35.
61 Keay 2005: 303-304; Aldrich 1996: 82.
62 Lefèvre-Pontalis 1902: 31, 78, 81, 88, 100, 108, 118, 121, 130, 143, 146, 153, 244, 246, 258
63 Ibid.: 74, 98, 108, 123-124, 148, 165, 174, 220, 227, 262, 292, 230.
64 Ibid.: 230, 256, 316.
65 Tuck 1995: 99-104.

extending its influence east of the Mekong Siam had violated French rights acquired with Annam.[66]

When the British government signalled that it would not involve itself in a Franco-Siamese dispute south of its own sphere of influence, the French government sprang into action. On 12 March 1893 a formal demand for recognition of French suzerainty over the eastern bank of the Mekong River was delivered to the Siamese government and on 16 March 1893 the French government accepted a proposal by the governor-general of Indochina for a 'police action' to clear the eastern bank of the Mekong from Siamese outposts. After Siamese attempts for a compromise had failed, the royal government in Bangkok decided to resist militarily and ordered the levying of troops as well as the construction of new forts on the Chao Phraya River south of Bangkok. Several factors appear to have contributed to this decision. King Chulalongkorn himself had been unwell since the previous year and his ministers were supported by the British minister in Bangkok as well as a newly hired Belgian adviser. The British minister's support for the Siamese did not, however, reflect his government's policy but rather his own strong anti-French sentiments shared by the Belgian adviser.

In April 1893, the first Indochinese troops reached the Mekong, where they easily dislodged the Siamese garrisons at two strategic locations. In mid-May Siamese forces captured the French column commander, Capitaine Thoreux. A successful ambush on a second column on 16 June 1893 resulted in the death of the French officer Gustave Grosgurin and several of his Annamese men.[67] The French press expressed their outrage over the 'murder' and demanded a strong French response. A flurry of articles and opinion pieces were published, drawing on the by then well-established discourse about Siam – the Siamese being at once a race of their own and a part of the Mongolian or Asian race, who were governed by an Oriental despot. They oppress the racially distinct Lao, who in turn are vassals of Annam, with increased vitriol.[68] To increase the emotional impact of the publications, the French officer's private letter to his mother expressing strong patriotic sentiments was also published.[69]

Lacking military forces in Indochina, the French government chose to employ gunboat diplomacy in the literal sense to force the Siamese government

66 Bos 1893b: 1-2; Bonvalit 1893: 1; Orléans 1893: 1. See also Orléans 1892: 14, 40, 41, 43, 53-54, for inclusions of these arguments into a book-length travelogue.

67 Tuck 1995: 105-112.

68 See, for example, Le grand écho du Nord de la France 1893: 1; O.B. 1893: 2; Bos 1893a: 1.

69 Capitaine Marine 1893: 83-86.

to make territorial concessions and pay an indemnity for the loss of life on the French side. Given this background, the government decided to bar the French ships, which arrived on 13 July 1893, from entering the Chao Phraya River in violation of the France-Siamese Treaty of 1856. The small French flotilla was fired upon but managed to push past the fortifications and to reach Bangkok nevertheless. Fifteen Siamese and two French sailors had been killed and one French pilot boat sunk, but by the end of the day two gunboats anchored near the royal palace.

With the French negotiating position thus strengthened – militarily and legally – and threatening a blockade of the Chao Phraya River, Auguste Pavie as minister in Bangkok (1892-1894) gained considerable concessions for France from Siam. In the Franco-Siamese treaty of October 1893, Siam ceded all territories east of the Mekong to France and agreed to demilitarize the Siamese possessions in Cambodia as well as a 25-mile zone west of the Mekong. In addition to a two million francs indemnity, Siam accepted that a crime had been committed in the case of Gustave Grosgurin and agreed to put the officer in charge on trial while granting France a veto right on the verdict.[70]

The First Moment: The Quest for Racial Difference

The most influential Siamese concession would prove to be the vaguely worded grating of extraterritorial jurisdiction to all 'Annamese and Lao subjects from the left bank [of the Mekong], and Cambodians'.[71] On the French side, the vagueness of the treaty's wording was to be exploited in order to create further incidents and force Siam to make additional concessions in the future.[72] In the following years the French side favoured the interpretation that not only people born in the territories that had become French Indochina were to receive protection but also their descendants.[73] The aim of this interpretation was to destabilize the kingdom at a time when violent crime was on the rise. French publications since the beginning of the century had pointed out that the Siamese were a minority in their kingdom. Even a considerable part of Bangkok's population was of an ancestry, or of a *race*, which had been forcibly migrated

70 Terwiel 2011: 210-213; Tuck 1995: 105-112.
71 Reinach 1902: 317.
72 Petersson 2000: 92.
73 Streckfuss 1993: 134-136.

from Cambodia and Lao territories east of the Mekong during military campaigns in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[74] They all found themselves now eligible for French protection from the Siamese authorities.

The government of King Chulalongkorn responded to this threat of a colonization from within with a twofold strategy. First, the population of the kingdom of Siam was made racially more homogenous by reinventing the Lao within the borders of the kingdom as Thai. As David Streckfuss has shown, following the 1893 treaty, a new vocabulary of compounds based on *chat* was introduced for concepts such as 'nationality' and paired with the ethnic label Thai.[75] These terms can be found in the Thai translations of Franco-Siamese conventions and treaties of the early twentieth century. A dictionary from 1901 shows that these terms mattered, due to the existence of English entries, but that no Thai expressions existed yet making rather clumsy paraphrasing necessary.[76] In the French version of the unratified 1902 Franco-Siamese Convention, inhabitants of the kingdom were all referred to as Siamese, thus revoking the traditional differentiation between Thai and the Lao, in particular. The Thai translation, however, turned all of them into Thai with a Thai nationality, *sanchat Thai* (สัญชาติไทย), rather than *nationalité siamoise*. Likewise, the term *chonchat* (ชนชาติ) for a national and *chueachat* (เชื้อชาติ) for a race or nation, and *chueasai* (เชื้อสาย) for a lineage of descend or race were pared with Thai to create a common and congruent national and racial identity.[77]

This strategy was not applied to the Khmer population of Siam and it was thus not argued during the period that the Khmer and Siamese were racially identical. A number of reasons may have contributed to this decision. First, language had not only been a traditional Siamese marker of human difference, but it had also become a marker of racial difference in nineteenth-century Europe. While Thai and Lao are closely related and mutually intelligible, Thai and Khmer are not. Second, the 1893 treaty established with the Mekong River a relatively clear border between Siam and the French possessions north of Cambodia and thus between the Lao populations of Siam and French Indochina. In contrast, the border between Siam and Cambodia, partially under Siamese control, were yet to be demarked and lacked clear geographic features that could be used for

74 Van Roy 2017: 25, 104-129, 204-205.
75 Streckfuss 1993: 139-140.
76 Ratanayatti 1901: 330.
77 Streckfuss 1993: 134-136.

the purpose.[78] When the Siamese court endeavoured to demark the said border in 1902, they thus settled on a linguistic one with Khmer-speakers to its east and Thai-speakers to its west.[79]

By incorporating the Lao into the Thai race or nation, French claims on parts of the kingdom's population could thus be partially curtailed. In order to establish this new racial and national identity internally, other means than international treaties had to be employed. The first census taken in the kingdom of Siam in 1904 included Khmer, Malay and Chinese as distinct ethnic identities, but not the Lao. They were now considered Thai as it was not 'feasible' to differentiate between the two groups and because the Lao 'regard[ed] themselves as Thai'.[80] A comparison between the draft for a history of the north-eastern region and the version included in an official history published in Bangkok in 1915 likewise shows the inclusion of the Lao within the Thai nation or race. References to the region's population as Lao rather than Thai in the draft were cancelled out and the people in question referred to as Thai in the published and official history. The Khmer remained mentioned as separate from the Thai, however.[81]

The foundation of a modern school system and the centralization of monastic education in 1898 and 1901, respectively, also served to propagate this new understanding of identity.[82] The new terms acquired binding legal significance with the Naturalization Act of 1912 and the Nationality Act of 1913.[83] The government also encouraged foreigners to follow suit. Accordingly, American missionaries in northern Siam rechristened their Laos Mission to the North Siam Mission.[84]

Semantic change and education alone were, however, insufficient. As long as protection by French consular courts was beneficial and available, individuals would seek it out. The second Siamese strategy was therefore to concentrate the government's efforts on administrative reforms to strengthen control over the kingdom's territory and population, thereby undermining the rationale of extraterritorial rights while also making them less attractive. By the turn of the century, the success of this strategy had become evident, The French government had realized that their policy of attempting to destabilize

78 As the above quote from the 1893 treaty shows, French protection was extended only to the Lao living on the left bank of the Mekong, whereas it was provided to all Cambodians.

79 Streckfuss 1993: 137-138.

80 Grabowsky 1996: 62-63.

81 Iijima 2018: 179-188.

82 Kesboonchoo-Mead 2004: 86-92

83 Loos 2002: 133-134.

84 Dodd 1923: 250.

Siam and curtail the kingdom's economic development to force further concessions had not succeeded. Internal reform and the economic development of eastern Siam made it increasingly more attractive for French *protégés* to embrace a Siamese or Thai identity; it had also strengthened British and weakened French business interests in the kingdom.[85] Crucial to convince individuals to reject *protégé* status had been the issue of ownership of land from which foreigners were barred.[86] The convention of 1904 already limited French protection to *personnes d'origine asiatique* born in French colonies and protectorates as well as their children. The Franco-Siamese Treaty of 1907 would then end the practice altogether for France's Asian subjects in exchange for them being granted the same rights as Siamese citizens and Siam's cession of her Cambodian possessions, thereby also advancing the congruity between the extent of the Thai race and the Kingdom of Siam's borders.

But another factor must be considered as well. The negotiations happened against the backdrop of the build-up of Japanese military power, the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902 and finally the defeat of France's ally in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. This and the increasing Japanese exports to Siam as well as the hiring of Japanese advisers by the government of King Chulalongkorn were a cause of concern in French Indochina, where an alliance between the two independent Asian states was feared.[87] By the early twentieth century therefore, a colonization from within had proven a failure while military action had become an unpromising option for the French colonialists.

The Second Moment: To Be or Not to Be Orientals?

Even before Siam's defeat by France in 1893, a series of reforms had been launched to establish a modern and centralized administration for the kingdom. The new bureaucracy necessitated a modern system of education to staff the new offices. And with it, a literate middle class emerged who became increasing dissatisfied with the limited opportunities for social mobility under the absolute monarchy and argued for more rapid change. King Chulalongkorn and his successor King Vajiravudh (1880-1925, r. 1910-1925) partly engaged with such criticism by arguing that not all Western political institutions or concepts could be transferred to Siam. In a speech to his bureaucrats, King Chulalongkorn likened doing so to 'copying an European textbook on

85 Petersson 2000: 281-286.
86 Larsson 2013: 50-60.
87 Tuck 1995: 212-215.

cultivating wheat and [using it to] grow long-grain rice or glutinous rice,' the result being of course that one 'will not harvest anything'.[88]

Following the Russo-Japanese War, such arguments became increasingly unconvincing. The Japanese and their colonial subjects had been granted consular jurisdiction in the 1898 Siamese-Japanese Treaty and subsequently Japanese advisers had been hired by the government of King Chulalongkorn. But it was the colonial war fought far from Siam's shores over the control of the Korean Peninsula that won the East Asian empire the attention of the Siamese middle class. It was not only covered in the nascent Bangkok press, but scenes from it were also shown in Bangkok's very first cinema opened by a Japanese entrepreneur.[89] In the wake of the war, two independent and critical journalists and publishers in Siam, K.S.R. Kulap (1834-1921) and Thianwan, published essays in which they argued that the introduction of constitutional politics into Japan made it a great power. As both countries were in Asia or the East/Orient and both peoples were Asians with 'yellow skin', Japan could serve as an example for Siam.[90] Just two years after the death of King Chulalongkorn and the succession of King Vajiravudh, a conspiracy to establish a constitutional monarchy by coup d'état was discovered. The document used by the plotters to convince new members to join them referred to Japan as an Asian or Oriental example for Siam just as the early journalists had done.[91]

King Vajiravudh responded to calls for political reform with an official nationalism centred on the monarchy which he promulgated through speeches and articles in the press. But he also argued against the suitability of constitutional or self-rule for the Siamese, because they were Asian or Orientals, thereby stressing their 'Asiatic' racial identity.[92] Additionally, the early twentieth century had also seen the rising nationalism among the Chinese immigrants who dominated the urban and modern sectors of the economy. The king responded to this potential second challenge to the authority of the absolutist state by arguing that the Siamese were fundamentally – and racially – different from the Chinese. An argument was then extended in relation to the Japanese, which were being referred to as role models for Siam by his critics. For the former he argued that only the Chinese constituted a 'yellow peril' and that they were as much as threat to the Siamese as to the 'white men'.[93] Japan, on the other hand,

88 Chulalongkorn 1969: 3-4.
89 Barmé 2002: 44-45.
90 K.S.R. Kulap 1907: 127-132; Thianwan 1905a: 1623; Thianwan 1979 [1905b]: 114-117.
91 Rian Sichan and Netphun Wiwitthanon 2013: 246-252.
92 Asvabahu 1912: 35-38, 37, 45, 49.
93 Asvabahu 1914: 5.

was not an exemplar because its rise to great power status was not due to constitutionalism but because of particular characteristics of the Japanese, which the Siamese did not share.[94]

During the subsequent reign of his brother and successor, this dual and contradictory line of argument continued.[95] It was argued on the one hand that the Siamese were racially distinct from the Japanese and that therefore the Japanese example of political change was not applicable to Siam. On the other hand, it was proposed that the Siamese were unfit for self-government precisely because they were Orientals – just as the Japanese were. The contradiction of arguing that the Siamese were at once Asian and yet different from other Asians did not escape the critics of the ancien regime. And so, articles arguing that the bedrock of the rise of Japan had been the establishment of a constitutional government and that due to a shared racial identity the empire of Japan was a role model for the kingdom of Siam continued to be published throughout the period of the absolute monarchy.[96]

Conclusion

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the idea of race was 'one of the pillars on which the world rested'.[97] Despite its influence and its claim to scientific objectivity the term always remained vague – or rather became more ambiguous over time. In late-nineteenth-century French Indochina, *race* could refer to any biologically understood population ranging from a small tribe to one of the large subdivisions of humanity defined by Georges Cuvier.

Meanings shifted depending on political expediency with the systematic and unambiguous classification by Jean-Baptiste-Julien d'Omalius d'Halloy never catching on. *Race* as a nation was used to make claims to people or territories as, for example, through the extension of consular jurisdiction to Lao and Cambodians residing in Siam. The idea of a yellow, Mongol or Asian race distinct and inferior to the Europeans in combination with the discourse of Orientalism in the meanwhile legitimized the French colonial project in Southeast Asia.

94 Asvabahu 1912: 49-76.
95 Prajadhipok 1974b: 15; Prajadhipok 1974a: 53.
96 Malitz 2016: 250-284.
97 Winant 2001: 113.

Two colonial wars around the turn of the twentieth century shaped the Siamese engagement with the political ramifications of this hegemonic ideology of race. The kingdom escaped formal colonization following its defeat in the non-declared Franco-Siamese War of 1893. But in its wake, King Chulalongkorn had to agree to a vaguely worded extension of consular jurisdiction, thereby possibly putting much of Siam's population under French protection. This necessitated a Siamese engagement with the ambiguous term 'race' and its meaning for a Siamese political identity. King Chulalongkorn's government oversaw the introduction of a new vocabulary to will into being a new collective identity for the kingdom's Thai and Lao subjects, who previously had been considered different and distinct peoples. This new Thai identity that distinguished the Thais of Siam from the Lao or Khmer of French Indochina was then spread through the new education system, administrative interventions such as census taking and the rewriting of local histories. By the early twentieth century, the threat of a conquest of Siam had been averted by the settlement of the kingdom's borders with the Western colonial powers. Likewise, the spectre of colonization from within had been banished through the de facto abolishment of consular jurisdiction for the powers' Asian subjects, with the notable exception of the Japanese and their colonial subjects.

The very reforms which had strengthened the Siamese state and made pledging allegiance to the Siamese state more attractive had also resulted in a middle class that began to demand political concessions. The kingdom's elite responded to this challenge with arguments derived from the Orientalist discourse of the colonial powers. As Orientals, the Siamese were said to be unfit for constitutional government. In the wake of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), the critical Siamese press responded to this by evoking the example of Japan. As an Asian people, the Japanese were said to have achieved the status of a great power recognized as such by the colonial powers by virtue of their constitutional government. To this King Vajiravudh responded by arguing that the Thai were distinct from the Japanese, as they were distinct from the Chinese or Khmer. The political appropriation of the idea of race by the absolutist state thus resulted in a contradiction. A common racial identity of all Asians was claimed to legitimize the absolute monarchy based on Orientalist stereotypes, while at the same time such a shared identity was rejected to render the great power of Japan with its constitution incomparable with Siam. Arguably, this contradictory line of reasoning and the inability to come to terms with the hegemonic ideology of race during the time of the absolute monarchy contributed to the ancien régime's diminishing legitimacy. It would not be overcome before the Siamese Revolution of 1932.

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5 'Sly Civility' and the Myth of the 'Lazy Malay'

The Discursive Economy of British Colonial Power during the Pahang Civil War, 1891-1895

Netusha Naidu

Abstract
Pahang is a Malay state with a political system that was continuously strained by conflict between territorial chiefs. The growing presence of the British led to repeated disagreements over concession payments, the size of the sultan's allowance and the presence of European revenue collectors, leading to the eventual outbreak of the Pahang Civil War of 1891-1895. This chapter examines how discursive practices during the war were developed to serve the interests of British colonial power. Through an analysis of imperial administrative writing, newspaper reports and secondary sources, two themes emerge: the production of knowledge about race and racial differences and the instances of slippage that dislodged and challenged the image of Malays as the indolent Other.

Keywords: newspapers, imperial administration, colonial power, Pahang Civil War, discursive practices

Introduction

Pahang is a Malay state with a political system that was continuously strained by conflict between territorial chiefs even before British intervention in the late 1880s. After the Bendaharas consolidated power at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, Sultan Ahmad Al-Mu'adzam Shah (r. 1863-1881), formerly known as Wan Ahmad, was crowned as Pahang's new ruler in 1863. Sultan Ahmad went on to become

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a well-respected *raja*, as he won the loyalty of chiefs through an offer of amnesty and also rewarded wealthy Chinese merchants.[1]

These developments stirred the interest of Sir William Jervois, governor of the Straits Settlements (in office 1875-1877), who sought to establish a foothold for British imperial power in Pahang. While initial attempts proved to be futile, it did not take long until Sultan Ahmad began courting British support in order to preserve his own legitimacy. The accession of the new sultan also took place during a period when the socio-economic conditions in Pahang were less than ideal, leading to tension between the ruling elite and the peasantry. The 1880s witnessed the deterioration of Ahmad's relationship with his chiefs. This in turn triggered a 'breakdown in the traditional pattern of government' as factional rivalries began to emerge.[2] In 1888, in order to quell the threat of opposition to his rule, the sultan finally accepted a British Resident named John Pickersgill Rodger (in office 1888-1896). While the British government had come to a settlement for mining concessions from the sultanate, it soon became apparent to the governor of the Straits Settlements, Sir Cecil Clementi Smith (in office 1887-1893), that Ahmad's political survival was contingent on his willingness to accept extensive administrative reforms. These would allow the British colonial administration to embark on its modernization project and draw Pahang into its imperial sphere, thereby gaining access to its abundant natural resources.[3] Far from bringing peace and order, the presence of the British led to repeated disagreements over concession payments. There were also disputes over the size of the sultan's allowance and the presence of European collectors. The escalating tensions between the Pahang chiefs and British administrators became more frequent as the Resident system expanded. Growing British influence over the social, economic and political life of Pahang society led eventually to the outbreak of the Pahang Civil War.[4]

For historians of modern Malaysia, the Pahang Civil War from 1891 to 1895 marks one of the defining moments in Malay nationalist historiography. Not only was it important as an example of the encroachment of imperial political and economic structures in British Malaya, but the war also came to symbolize the struggle to protect the sovereignty of traditional Malay states. Local leaders like Dato' Bahaman (1838-1894), To' Gajah (d. 1901) and Mat Kilau (1847-1970) have become etched into the historical memory of Malay

1 Gopinath 1996: 29.
2 Ibid.: 60.
3 Ibid.: 103.
4 Andaya and Andaya 1984: 169.

nationalists.[5] This chapter aims to examine how discursive practices during the war were developed to serve the interests of British colonial power. It places emphasis on how the opposition against the British administration in Pahang challenged and destabilized the existing colonial view of Malays as 'lazy' and 'passive' subjects. This study undertakes a discursive analysis of imperial administrative writing, newspaper reports and secondary sources revolving around the episodes of the Pahang Civil War through a postcolonial theoretical lens. Two key themes will be investigated in this chapter: first, the exercise of British colonial power through the production of knowledge about race and racial differences during this period in Pahang. Secondly, the moments of 'slippage' in the colonialist discourse that disrupted and challenged the image of Malays as the indolent Other.

It is worth explaining why such concepts were chosen for this critical examination of the Pahang Civil War. Like other colonial wars across Southeast Asia in the nineteenth century, the invention of race was located within the 'framework of the modern grammar of racial difference' which consists of 'the general epistemic violence of imperialism, the construction of a self-immolating colonial subject for the glorification of the social mission of the colonizer'.[6] In an insightful essay that informs the purpose of the present study, Tayyab Mahmud has explained how the administration of violence in colonial territories was essential to conserve, maintain and ensure that the laws of the imperializing powers remained enforceable. One of the ways in which this process took place was through the dissemination and reproduction of stereotypes of native communities which act as 'as scaffolding for legally sanctioned regimes for discipline and control of myriad facets of native life'.[7] Racialized generalizations of individual characteristics were deemed predestined and gave clout to colonial powers to reduce their subjects to essentialized archetypes, so that they conform to a set of legal regimes that favour imperial political and socio-economic interests in conquered lands. While these observations have been repeatedly made in the colonial administration of India, they could also be made in the making of British Malaya in the nineteenth century, and the Pahang Civil War, in particular.[8]

The greatest challenge that has emerged when critically examining the narratives of the Pahang Civil War is the lack of documentation on

5 Ibid.
6 Spivak 1985: 243, 251.
7 Mahmud 1999: 1230-1231.
8 Ibid.: 1235.

indigenous perspectives regarding the conflict. It was difficult to acquire Malay-language primary sources which can narrate the history of the war from the vantage point of both the rebels and local inhabitants. Although this study utilizes secondary sources, colonial administrative writings and English-language news reports, this could be considered an attempt to read colonial discourse in Pahang against the grain through the employment of various postcolonial theories. This analysis is done in the hope of broadening the scope of critical race studies which, as Mahmud has emphasized, should keep European colonial encounters as a 'high priority on its research agenda'. This could be achieved by posing the following questions: What grammar of racial difference reconciled colonial domination with Enlightenment agendas of freedom, equality, and reason? How did the colonies, as particular sites of knowledge production, facilitate constructions of race? What particular disciplines and technologies were fashioned to enable such constructions? How was racial difference inserted into discursive and institutional structures of colonial rule? How were colonizers' discourses and practices of racial difference adopted and internalized by the colonized?[9]

Guided by these questions, this study then makes use of theorizations such as Syed Hussein Alatas's 'the myth of the lazy native' and Homi K. Bhabha's 'sly civility'. The use of these theories act as a method to articulate the existence of a discursive economy that strove to maintain the legitimacy of British colonial authority in nineteenth-century Pahang and, as will be demonstrated in the following sections, show how the discourse of race and racial differences permit the extraordinary regulation of natives for their 'prosecution, discipline, pacification and eradication'.[10]

In his book, *The Myth of the Lazy Native: A Study of the Image of the Malays, Filipinos and Javanese from the 16th to the 20th Century and Its Function in the Ideology of Colonial Capitalism* (1977), Syed Hussein Alatas (1928-2007) critically analysed the origins and functions of myths in administrative writing in the Dutch East Indies and British Malaya and how they served the ends of racialized colonial capitalism. He argued that colonial discourse capitalized on the concept of the lazy native to develop moral justifications for the coercive recruitment of labour in their colonies. By using negative imagery to describe colonized subjects, European conquest could be rationalized and reproduced.[11] The active role of these distortions of native identity

9 Ibid.: 1246.
10 Ibid.: 1235.
11 Alatas 1977: 2.

favoured the logic of colonial capitalism and essentially diminished the potential of self-determined Southeast Asian societies.[12]

Alatas noted that Dutch colonial rule in the Indonesian-Malay archipelago was at its peak in the mid-eighteenth century. This was the point in which natives became a topic of discussion among 'European colonial authors, administrators, priests and travellers' who desired to convince their own people of the backwardness of the colonized natives.[13] Yet many of these European writers had minimal encounters with natives as they were not direct participants in the colonial capitalist system. Instead, they were part of the civil service and 'did not function in the total life pattern of colonial capitalism'.[14] It is interesting that Alatas makes these observations about the circumstances in which European accounts of the Malays were made. They reveal a certain discrepancy between the characteristics of the Malays and the way in which colonialist discourse illustrated them in relation to the modern European world, thus exposing its internal contradictions. The Malays were considered backward and indolent not because they generally avoided any type of work, but because they refused to conform, unlike the Indian and Chinese coolies who were trapped by the colonial capitalist system.[15] European colonial expansion was often met with resistance and counter-insurgencies. This meant that from the sixteenth century forwards the imperial project was coloured by conflicts which continued throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[16] As a result, the myth of the lazy native became a useful narrative device in the political and economic development of Southeast Asia, allowing as it did a superficial justification to British administrators' quest for domination. It manifested in a corpus of colonial and postcolonial writing that stereotyped Malays in general as a race apart. They continue to be seen as 'the most persistent and widespread sources of communal misunderstanding' which shape the politics of contemporary Malaysia to this day.[17]

Writing in the same vein as Alatas, Homi Bhabha in his work *The Location of Culture* (1994) examined how such discursive constructions served as mechanisms of control. Utilizing theories on language and subjectivity, he emphasized the key role that communication plays in the effective exercise of colonial authority. According to Bhabha, such authority is deemed

12 Ibid.: 7.
13 Ibid.: 22.
14 Ibid.: 72.
15 Ibid.: 75.
16 Ibid.: 117.
17 Ibid.: 115.

'hybrid' or 'ambivalent'. Thus, it offers potential sites of resistance for the colonized subject.[18] Among the essays in this book, 'Sly Civility' is the most relevant to the study of the Pahang Civil War. This is because it questions the stability of neat binaries such as civility versus savagery or enlightenment versus ignorance. In the essay, Bhabha makes a critical analysis of Thomas Babington Macaulay's 'Minute upon Indian Education' (1835) and John Stuart Mill's response to it as a point of departure to question how colonial discourse was developed by a continuous process of 'splitting, doubling, turning into its opposite, projecting' polarizations of identity and modernity onto native realities of politics, society and culture.[19] The term 'sly civility' was taken by Bhabha from an 1818 sermon by Archdeacon Potts to express the contradictions in liberal universalism propounded by British imperialists in the nineteenth century, such as John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) and John Sydenham Furnivall (1878-1960). He thematized 'sly civility' to capture how cultures interact with each other in a more complex way than the perceived rigid binaries that colonial discourse insists upon.[20] To Bhabha, the 'historicist telos' inferred in the Enlightenment is the ultimate technology for colonialism.[21] Both Alatas's and Bhabha's analytical approaches allow us to make sense of the rationale behind the colonial strategies of control and the implicit meanings of the language which actively constructs the colonial image of Malays. It helps us understand how notions of laziness, cowardice and lawlessness were in fact acts of resistance against the colonizer.

This chapter begins by exploring the origins of the Pahang Civil War through an assessment of secondary sources. The first section demonstrates that the contentious, unstable power dynamics between the chiefs and Sultan Ahmad was seen as a situation that could be taken advantage of by the colonial authority. The second section will use methods of identifying rhetoric in colonial discourse to examine news reports during and after the outbreak of the civil war. Through this analysis, recurrent themes and interpretations are met with contradictions, revealing the desire of British colonial authorities to distort narratives surrounding the rebels and their anti-colonial struggle. The third section will shift the focus from colonial responses in news reporting to the rebels and the nature of Malay resistance during the course of the Pahang Civil War. The selected writings of Hugh Clifford (1866-1941), a British colonial official in Pahang (initially

18 Loomba 1998: 98.
19 Ibid.: 137-138.
20 Tibile 2012: 77.
21 Bhabha 1994: 79.

a government agent and superintendent of Ulu Pahang [1888-1889], later Resident, 1896-1900/1901-1903), will form the basis of assessing the effectiveness of native resistance to colonial strategies of dominating the Pahang Civil War. To conclude, I summarize the key arguments made in this study with regard to the perceptions, interpretations and understandings of the events of the Pahang Civil War. It closes with a brief appraisal of native agency in actively shaping the regulation of the discursive economy of British colonial power in nineteenth-century Pahang.

The Origins of the Pahang Civil War and Colonial Ambition

The importance of the Pahang Civil War (1891-1895) in the overall trajectory of Malaysian history is widely recognized. The beginning of the uprising has been attributed to an incident that took place on 18 October 1891 when Sultan Ahmad issued a directive to revoke the title of a prominent chief, Dato' Bahaman, Orang Kaya of Semantan, for not complying with mining regulations issued since 1888. Dato' Bahaman declared open rebellion in response, triggering a series of violent conflicts over the course of the next five years. These would end with the de facto establishment of British rule in the state and the execution of the remaining rebels, many of whom had attempted to flee to the Siamese-Malaya border.[22]

The events that resulted from colonial intervention in Pahang reveal significant shifts in what can be conceived as traditional Malay political systems. Through an examination of secondary sources for this period, it can be deduced that the contentious, unstable power dynamics between the chiefs and the raja was seen as a state of precariousness that could be taken advantage of by colonial authority. Sultan Ahmad's courting of British intervention in order to preserve his own legitimacy within the kingdom opened the way for the encroachment of colonial power in Pahang. As a result of this, the sultan's relationship with his chiefs became fractured, revealing how Malay conceptions of authority and loyalty were subjected to manipulation as the British colonial administration embarked on its modernization project to absorb Pahang into its imperial space and secure control over its abundant natural resources.

A key text informing studies on Pahang's history is Aruna Gopinath's *Pahang, 1800-1933: A Political History* (1996), which deals with the political developments in Pahang during the colonial era. Gopinath traces the events

22 Noor 2011: 96-97.

that paved the way for Sultan Ahmad's rise to power and his attempts to 'avoid completely being deprived of his prerogative as the fount of traditional power' in spite of the expansion of British rule.[23] Gopinath uses a wide range of colonial documents to demonstrate the changes that occurred in Malay political economy following the introduction of Western conceptions of power. Based on the several failed attempts at getting Sultan Ahmad to accept the Residency system, she described the relationship between the Bendahara and the Chiefs of Council as 'a diffused decentralized delegation of authority' that was an integral feature of Malay politics.[24] Ahmad's authority was perceived to derive not just from wealth, but also from his followers. This indicates, as Gopinath noted, that kinship was not a criterion for those who wished to join the Pahang administration, unlike other Malay states. Pahang's political establishment was led by chiefs who were considered to be 'a power group in their own right'. While they owed Sultan Ahmad their loyalty, they often circumvented bureaucratic loopholes to fulfil desires to accumulate wealth.[25] In agreement with the Colonial Secretary in the Straits Settlements, Sir Cecil Clementi Smith (in office 1878-1885), Gopinath believed that Ahmad sought foreign intervention in the late 1880s in order to 'save himself', poor socio-economic conditions and the weaknesses of his administration having triggered 'dissension between members of the ruling class and the peasantry' against his authority.[26]

Sultan Ahmad's appeal to the British caused an even greater level of instability and eventually led to the uprising of 1891. The chiefs remained uncooperative in the face of diminishing traditional roles in tax collection.[27] As some engaged in armed rebellion, Gopinath pays close attention to Ahmad's participation in the civil war. She interpreted his retreat to Pulau Tawar as a form of 'passive resistance' towards the colonial administration, at the same time as his apparent lack of involvement with the rebels compelled the British to believe he did not pose a threat.[28] Gopinath emphasized that Ahmad's behaviour was designed to prevent him from having to play an active role in quelling the rebellion. The sultan's 'dual role' in the war had proven to be very useful in providing assistance to the rebels. This led to Gopinath's claim that the political reforms introduced by colonial forces in nineteenth-century Pahang had created the structural preconditions

23 Gopinath 1996: iii-iv.
24 Ibid.: 50.
25 Ibid.: 52-56.
26 Ibid.: 60, 103.
27 Ibid.: 110.
28 Ibid.: 115, 138.

for 'the rise and development of a native anti-colonial movement'. She also mentioned that Sultan Ahmad's tactics prevailed over British attempts to reduce the authority of native rulers to subdue the dissidents.[29] Although this text is heavily reliant on colonial narratives about the war, her observations are nonetheless important in being informed by an in-depth knowledge of the power relations between the Malay ruler and his chiefs and give a preliminary understanding of how they worked to mitigate the interruptions made by colonial power.

According to Abu Talib Ahmad, Pahang's historical developments have been very significant in the writing of Malaysia's official national history. In his review essay of published literature on the state's history, he dedicated a section to the uprising of 1891-1895.[30] In this section, Ahmad attributed great importance to his book *Sejarah Dato' Bahaman Orang Kaya Semantan* (A history of Dato' Bahaman, the Orang Kaya [Person of Rank/Chief] of Semantan) (1959), which was based on his oral history interviews with Imam Mat Diah, son of one of Bahaman's henchmen. To him, Bahaman's success in the rebellion had a major impact on the establishment of the state of Pahang. He could even be labelled as the 'Father of Pahang Independence'. With this in mind, Ahmad believed that the victory of the Pahang Civil War belonged to Bahaman and his allies. His account of the war was said to contradict official historiography because it emphasized that the 'focal point' of the resistance began with one of the Orang Kaya Berlapan, Haji Wan Daud Wan Pahang (1800-1889). It was he who challenged the British colonial administration's decision to change the capital to Kuala Lipis. Although Ahmad did not base his book on the nature of British intervention in Pahang, he shed light on how the civil war was a product of lesser chiefs experiencing a 'loss of social status' due to their being denied 'any form of state remuneration'.[31] As important as Ahmad's oral history account is in contesting official narratives of the Pahang Civil War, it still requires further investigation through a comparison with colonial narratives and the accounts left by other actors. This would help to expose the contradictions in present-day Pahang historiography, rather than basing our understanding of wartime events solely on Dato' Bahaman's account, recognizing that the rebel leader might not have been the sole 'hero' of the civil war.

In order to assess the production of colonial knowledge of the Pahang Civil War, it is crucial to be able to understand the power relations between

29 Ibid.: 141-146.
30 Ahmad 2016: 37.
31 Ibid.: 44-45.

the Raja and the chieftains from a more indigenous perspective. Anthony Milner has done so in his work *Kerajaan: Malay Political Culture on the Eve of Colonial Rule* (1982). For Milner, the nature of this pre-colonial governance, also known as the *kerajaan*, can be seen to be more than just 'being in the condition of having a raja'.[32] Through a textual analysis of the *Hikayat Pahang* (The History of Pahang) and British colonial observations, he concluded that the political power of Malay chiefs was predicated on their wealth, which was said to attract followers.[33] In the case of the raja, wealth was only important if it allowed him to acquire more loyal subjects. Milner was thus interested in studying the rationale of the Malay rulers' 'preoccupation with the accumulation of subjects', and whether or not 'wealth constitutes the only grounds of allegiance'.[34]

Contrary to Gopinath's perspective of Sultan Ahmad's involvement in the Pahang Civil War, Milner's reading of the *Hikayat Pahang* has led him to argue that the sultan's role was 'ceremonial rather than practical'. In his view, more attention was given to his state regalia than to his tactical skills.[35] He also noted that emphasis was placed on Ahmad's generosity in the *Hikayat Pahang* because rulers which develop the quality of *murah* (liberality) are perceived to be more just.[36] Such incongruity in reading Ahmad's political power must be based on the effort to offer a 'Malay perspective' on the political system in Pahang. Yet, it also reveals why Sultan Ahmad's contradictory responses towards the rebels and colonial officers need to be further analysed. Was the raja's non-cooperative behaviour during the war truly a means of passive resistance when his power and privileges were being threatened? Or was his ceremonial rather than tactical role in the war a prime example of Malay indolence as often depicted in colonial discourse of race? Milner highlighted that 'superficial issues', such as formal state occasions and 'apparently "empty" titles' conferred by rulers, must be fundamental to Malay political relations as the reputation of 'public men' can be profoundly damaged if not correctly addressed.[37] This means that the ceremonial role of the raja is inherently political and can therefore be used by the colonizer to attain specific outcomes, as we shall see shortly.

Evidently, there has been a lot of focus on the Malay ruling class in writings about the Pahang Civil War. However, there could also be other forms

32 Milner 2016: 15.
33 Ibid.: 42.
34 Ibid.: 110.
35 Ibid.: 75.
36 Ibid.: 66-67.
37 Ibid.: 111, 155.

of resistance during this period which might be helpfully explored. Donald Nonini wrote that besides outward rebellions, there are other 'cultural forms of resistance' that can emerge among native subjects, such as 'work slowdowns by "lazy natives"' and counter-narratives to what he describes as 'colonial social systems'.[38] Nonini's study of Malay society's political, economic and social system is relevant to our understanding the causes of the Pahang Civil War because he historicized the impact of colonial intervention on the structure of traditional Malay society. He described Malaya as 'a complex, evolving system connected to higher levels of the British empire, and responded to the perturbations and oscillations inherent in the development of industrial capitalism'. Institutional reforms, introduced into the Malay states by the British colonial administration, resulted in 'conflicts between appropriating classes'. These were often resolved by the colonial state in favour of colonial capitalists, such changes usually being described as 'beneficial' to the natives, an explanation which speaks directly to the discourse of 'enlightened colonialism'.[39]

According to Nonini, the societal structures that were being changed were that of what he regarded as 'the kin-ordered *ra'ayat* (people) Malay community' because of the 'inherent laziness' of the Malays and their 'wasteful' land use practices which impeded further Western capital penetration.[40] He also made a very important point by identifying the weakness of the British colonial state. This in turn allows us the opportunity to ponder further on the sort of class contradictions that would emerge in the form of the Pahang uprising in 1891. In order for the administration to ensure the centralization of revenue collection, they required very sophisticated mechanisms to monitor and enforce exploitation of rural Malays as wage labourers. However, this was inherently impractical as such manpower 'simply did not exist "on the ground" in sufficient numbers to ensure their success'.[41] The same can be applied to Pahang's situation, as sources have noted the relatively small police force in the kingdom during these years, attempts to establish such stations failing due to aggressive opposition from lesser chiefs like Dato' Bahaman.[42] Thus, Nonini concluded that the various forms of resistance – whether organized attacks or passive inaction – to Britain's project in the hinterlands of Pahang were strengthened by tropes

38 Nonini 1992: 5.
39 Ibid.: 7-9.
40 Ibid.: 24.
41 Ibid.: 50.
42 Andaya and Andaya 1984: 169; De Silva 1962: 175; Gopinath 1996: 111.

of indolence manufactured by European Orientalists. Indeed, native rebels may well have taken advantage of these preconceptions to design their own counter-strategies.[43]

The weakness in Gopinath's thesis is her lack of acknowledgment that a strong dependency on colonial documentation inevitably results in the reproduction of very one-sided, Eurocentric narratives about the events of the Pahang Civil War. Hence, Farish Noor's theoretical intervention matters as he reveals that Pahang's state history was consciously constructed to bring native subjects 'into the orbit of colonial order of power and knowledge'.[44] He argues that the colonial history of Pahang attempts to erase the existence of pre-colonial Malay society and politics through 'an act of double silencing'.[45] To Noor, Pahang in the nineteenth century was a 'decentralized, fluid and contested political terrain' that was characteristic of Southeast Asia but would be perceived as 'irrational, destructive, non-productive and costly' in colonial encounters. Thus, British colonizers engaged in a process to redefine Pahang as a political entity with static origins and meanings.[46] For this process to be possible, Noor shows how Hugh Clifford's writings were an essential tool for bringing Pahang into the realm of colonial knowledge in order to render it governable. Noor emphasizes that Clifford contributed to 'the discourse of invented racial differences' in nineteenth-century Malaya. This was because his fictional and non-fictional writings often degraded those native subjects appearing in his novels and reports, while presenting a justification for British forces to engage in a 'civilizing' mission through colonization.[47]

Through an examination of these writings, Noor makes several observations that are necessary for studies that attempt to problematize colonial discourse on race. For instance, he highlights the 'narrative dichotomy' in Clifford's works, resulting in the polarization of the Malay Peninsula, where the West Coast is described as 'civilized' while the East Coast, where Pahang is located, is seen as 'wilder'.[48] Such a portrayal of the Malay states was necessary for the function of British colonial discourse in Malaya. Noor's attempt to deconstruct the history of Pahang reveals that the accumulation of knowledge on race and racial differences was based on tropes invented for the sake of legitimizing colonial intervention. Nonetheless, Noor's book

43 Nonini 1992: 64.
44 Noor 2011: 5.
45 Ibid.: 13.
46 Ibid.: 30.
47 Ibid.: 52-53.
48 Ibid.: 59.

does not pay sufficient attention to the impact of the Pahang Civil War on the overall official historiography of the state's history. His analysis of Clifford's writings on the making of the colonial regime is sharp, but he failed to describe the extent to which Clifford's literary works reshaped and reimagined the events of the civil war. This is where Muhammad Haji Salleh's contribution to Pahang historiography fills the gap in Noor's work on Clifford.

According to Salleh, Clifford's writings were for a British audience. They thus employed 'the colonial conventions of the English language, attitudes and approved subplots of native lives'. As a result, he succeeded in effectively fixing a persuasive definition of the Malays and their characteristics.[49] A particularly important example of this would be in his novel *A Prince of Malaya* (1926), where Clifford describes the main character, Prince Saleh, with metaphors of femininity and wilderness which run as a common trend in literature on the colonized subjects. Salleh dissected the intentions behind Clifford's depiction of the native prince in his novel by contrasting them with the narratives in the *Hikayat Pahang* (The History of Pahang). With Salleh's analysis, Clifford's Orientalist distortions of Sultan Ahmad in his novel become more apparent. However, besides a desire to disempower the native royal, it would seem interesting to investigate still further the importance of Clifford's writings in shaping the popular memory of the Pahang Civil War. Such an illustration of this particular turning point in modern Malay history gives the impression that Clifford had an extremely close proximity to the rebellion. This derived from the authority he exercised in Pahang as British Agent at a critical juncture in Pahang's history in the late 1880s.

However, this might not have actually been the case as J.S. de Silva has pointed out in his study of British relations with Pahang from 1884 to 1895. In fact, it was Sir Andrew Clarke, governor of the Straits Settlements (in office 1873-1875), a full decade and a half earlier, who, under instructions from Lord Kimberley, Secretary of State for the Colonies (in office 1870-1874, 1880-1882) in London, seems to have played the decisive role in persuading Wan Ahmad, then still Bendahara of Pahang (in office 1863-1881; post-1881 sultan) to accept a British Resident at his court.[50] De Silva held the opinion that Clifford 'seems not to have influence in any way' due to the fact that he was only the British Agent in Pahang, sharing a similar status with that of a consul-general. De Silva quoted the then governor of the Straits Settlements, Sir Clementi Smith (in office 1887-1893), to prove his point:

49 Salleh 2009: 28-29.

50 De Silva 1962: 5.

He [Clifford] could never get at the Sultan; he was perfectly incapable of advising the Sultan as a Resident does, and there was no actual advice given to the Sultan as a Resident does, and there was no actual advice given to the Sultan in administering his country until the Resident went there.[51]

The emergence of such historical angles suggest that there is still a gap in researching the discursive construction of the Pahang Civil War. The bulk of the existing literature dealing with the sporadically organized resistance in nineteenth-century Pahang, published in the late twentieth century, seeks to explain events from the perspective of the British colonial administration. This includes their fixed conceptions of what constituted traditional Malay politics and character. As the Pahang Civil War becomes more distant in the annals of national history, the perpetuation of narratives asserting racial differences between the colonizer and colonized has continued to shape the political and social dimensions of Malay identity. Therefore, there has to be continued examination of existing literature on the Pahang Civil War as well as theoretical analysis to demonstrate that such colonial wars in the nineteenth century consist of defining moments where the opposition of Malay rebels to the British administration in Pahang challenged and destabilized the existing colonial imagination of Malays as 'lazy' and 'passive' beings. As a result, the British colonial administration had to articulate a discursive economy to protect its growing interests in nineteenth-century Pahang. They did this in two different ways: first, through the development of a colonial body of knowledge on race and racial differences. Secondly, through the usage of nonviolent yet coercive tactics, myth-making and subjective documentation to fix the image of Malays as an indolent Other.

'A Little War': Narratives of Colonial Discourse in News Reporting of the Pahang Civil War

This section treats the reporting of the Pahang Civil War as a form of discourse that supported the goal of British imperialism. Similarly to Ilia Rodriguez's study of news reporting in the 1898 Spanish-American War, this analysis aims to reveal 'a process of inscribing ethnic otherness on the people whose destinies were being debated and decided'.[52] Selected newspaper reports between 1891 and 1910 will be examined to show how Malay rebels were framed as the belligerent Other.

51 Ibid.: 15.

52 Rodriguez 1998: 284.

Edward Said has argued that imperialism and colonialism were supported by bodies of ideology and knowledge that included the view of particular places and people that 'require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination'.[53] This would result in print journalism and mass media becoming essential institutions that actively organized, selected and controlled the narrative surrounding the colonized subjects. As a result, news reporting turned into a form of 'discursive practice'. This engaged in a systematic adaptation of elements of the discourse selecting certain events, thus turning them 'into a language of popular ppeal'.[54] Following Spurr's approach to analysing colonial discourse in news reporting, selected excerpts from the *Straits Times*, the *Singapore Free Press*, the *Mercantile Adviser* and the *Daily Advertiser* describing the events of the civil war were strung together in 'a series of basic tropes which emerge from the Western colonial experience' that inherently mapped the discursive economy of the Pahang situation.[55] This section will show that the ambiguity in the texts under consideration demonstrate a concerted effort by British forces to frame the Pahang Civil War as a 'crisis in a kingdom' that was suffering 'its own crisis of authority'.[56]

Coverage of the civil war in Pahang focused on the deployment of Sikh policemen in various parts of the state with the primary purpose of securing control over areas deemed prone to disturbances. In the selected pieces published both during and after the civil war – namely between 1891 and 1910 – there were very few references to the experiences of the inhabitants of Pahang themselves. Instead, most of the reports were drawn from the reactions of the residents to the repeated skirmishes. The dominant tropes that appeared include descriptions of the situation as a 'little' or 'petty' war, the repeated debasement of the Malay rebels and the inevitability of British rule over their land.

As noted in a retrospect of the civil war published in the *Singapore Free Press*, it was difficult for the governor and his administrators in Singapore to receive 'reliable news' of the ongoing affairs in Pahang.[57] In 1910, another article in the *Singapore Free Press* lamented that 'not only [...] are the men that were opposed to one another in that little war gone, but even the very records of the great game of hide and seek, which for months was carried

53 Said 1993: 9.
54 Rodriguez 1998: 284.
55 Spurr 1993: 3.
56 Ibid.: 11.
57 Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser 1902.

on have also disappeared'. The unnamed author continued: 'There was no proper historian attached to the expedition so the history of this little peninsular war will remain unwritten, but it is a pity that the official despatches should have been lost.'[58] This reference to the Pahang Civil War being a 'little war' has been repeatedly used in various reports during the period of the disturbances. It could be argued that this trope was an essential component of affirming surveillance in the sense that Spurr has used it. Spurr defined surveillance as the visual observation of the colonial territory and its inhabitants from the privileged gaze of the colonizer while excluding the lived reality of the colonized.[59] The desire to describe the civil war as something miniscule could be interpreted as an effort to reassert the authority of the colonizer over the situation. Examples of such observations of the war include an article which described the discontent in Pahang as *main-main prang* (play-fighting), to express the 'disaffected petty chiefs' were treating warfare like a form of play-acting in 'a desultory and guerilla sort of fashion'.[60] Another article detailed how the rebels killed Chinese coolies and Sikhs, and also mentioned that the Malay tactics of warfare do not even qualify it as a war because it involved 'a series of petty ambuscades and plunders'. Instead, it was 'more embarrassing than a war'.[61] This is further reinforced by the premature declarations of the war being 'virtually over' in the *Straits Times*, which in 1892 claimed that all opposition to the British administration had 'collapsed before the Sultan's advance'.[62] In the *Daily Advertiser*, indignation was expressed at the governor of the Straits Settlements, Sir Cecil Clementi Smith (in office 1887-1893), for 'every probability' that he will 'once again, take his words back' on the civil war being an issue of the distant past.[63]

Many of the news reports used similar debasing tropes towards the Malay rebels involved in the ensuing skirmishes. As Spurr highlighted, there is a 'certain parallelism in the themes of debasement' employed in colonial discourse. Qualities such as 'dishonesty, suspicion, superstition, lack of discipline' were conferred upon colonized societies to give appearance of not being able to govern themselves and therefore, require the intervention of an external colonial authority.[64] More often than not, Malay rebels like

58 Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser 1910.
59 Spurr 1993: 14.
60 Daily Advertiser 1892.
61 Straits Times Weekly Issue 1892a.
62 Straits Times Weekly Issue 1892b.
63 Daily Advertiser 1892.
64 Spurr 1993: 76.

Dato' Bahaman and Mat Kilau were regarded as 'instigators' and 'traitors' who were terrorizing the local inhabitants of Pahang. Dato' Bahaman, the Orang Kaya Semantan, was considered the leader throughout the period of the rebellion, with a strong relationship with Sultan Ahmad.[65] Yet an unnamed 'gentleman who has been much in Pahang lately' in published diary entries claimed that Bahaman was a disaffected chief who was 'probably' not in the right to claim compensation because he was a 'Kling from Singapore and not a Pahang Malay as is supposed'.[66] Mat Kilau played a key role in convincing his father, To' Gajah, an Orang Besar Raja and the sultan's favourite, to recruit more followers to the resistance effort. This was seen as a dangerous moment for British forces because he threatened the state's gold mines in May and June 1892.[67] Despite this, the journalist and *Straits Times* associate editor (1954-1970), Edwin Allington Kernard (1902-1977), wrote in the *Straits Times* (decades later, in 1970) that Mat Kilau was 'not much more than a name in Clifford's report'. The article was concerned with the republication of Hugh Clifford's report on the 'pursuit of the raiding party which struck in Kuala Tembeling in 1894, and then disappeared back into Kelantan'. Kennard went on to describe how Clifford gave considerable tribute to Malays who were a part of his Terengganu expedition and were very attentive and obedient to his calls even if they were 'wet or dry, hungry, hot or cold, weary for want of sleep'.[68]

Thus, besides deliberate attempts to eclipse the leadership of the two rebels in leading the rebellion in Pahang, the news reports were also utilized as an opportunity to record how British accounts of the Malay rebels showed them as being characteristically unprepared. One such example was a commentary on the defeat of Malay rebels in Jeram Ampai which described their martial capabilities in the following way:

> The Malay is facile princeps a builder of stockades, and he will hold on there so long, and just so long as he does not compromise his chance of retreat. His only art of war is strategy of the Fabian order, and ambush is his forte. He runs away to fight another day, *reculer pour mieux sauter* being a cardinal principle of his tactics. The only way to bring a Malay force to book is to really corner it.[69]

65 Ahmad 2016: 35.
66 Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser 1892b.
67 Gopinath 1996: 147.
68 Straits Times 1970.
69 Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser 1894a.

In addition to that, the Special Commissioner of the *Singapore Free Press* recounted his annoyance at the repeated usage of the word '*takut*' (afraid) by Malay villagers. He assigned this to their 'inordinate dread' that the Siamese authorities would retaliate upon learning about their complicity in supplying intelligence to the British. He then explained that his irritation stemmed from the fact that Malays should already be prepared to acknowledge that the Europeans are their 'would-be rulers'.[70] According to David Spurr, this is because colonial discourse comprises 'acts of appropriation' which allow the colonizer to make an implicit declaration regarding territory surveyed as their own. The colonizers assumed themselves to be the future inheritors of the land with a vision 'charged with racial ambition'. He argues that one of the most explicit manifestations of this 'appropriation' can be found in the writings of European colonial administrators who perceived the natural resources of colonized lands as rightfully belonging to 'civilization' and 'mankind', and not to its indigenous inhabitants.[71] This argument seems to apply perfectly to Pahang's situation since a number of reports predating British intervention during the civil war described the state as being richly endowed with gold and tin deposits. One author wrote that the governor of the Straits Settlements should not 'allow English authority to be discredited' as it makes them appear 'too weak or too timid, to enforce order'.[72] Another reflected thus in his diary entries published in the *Singapore Free Press*:

> All sensible Malays are aware that the whole Peninsula must eventually fall under British control and the sooner the better for all concerned; there is nothing to prevent it, the thing ought to be accomplished fact today, with a regiment of Sikhs and Malay Police, as detectives and messengers in each State.

The statement above was supposedly a reiteration of the opinions of Pahang natives in the course of an ordinary conversation. It was claimed by the author that the Malays believed there would be no peace in the land until the sultan was no longer involved in the rebellion.[73] Similarly, an article in the *Straits Times* of 4 June 1895 remarked that the only way to bring an end

70 Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser 1902.
71 Spurr 1993: 28.
72 Straits Times Weekly Issue 1892a.
73 Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser 1892b.

to the war would be when the British administration begins to genuinely exert 'more real pressure and force' on Pahang.[74]

It could be argued that the portrayal of Malay rebels as seen through these examples suggest that the colonial discourse of the civil war was premised on the view of the Malay as being a cowardly native without the ability to mount effective resistance to British intervention. Coupled with the repeated iteration of fundamental differences between the colonizer and the colonized, Britain's intervention in Pahang was rationalized through a calculated distortion of social and human reality.[75] Since the consensus finally arrived at was that the war had come to an end with the detention of Dato' Bahaman, Mat Kilau and others by the Siamese authorities in 1895, these excerpts reveal a heady mixture of pleasure and power, exhibiting as they do a tone of commanding colonial journalism, and this despite the fact that colonial authority in the state was tenuous in the extreme at the time.[76] Consequently, it seems accurate to see these despatches as a 'syntax of deferral' as Bhabha has noted. They mark a persistent disparity between the events of Pahang's civil war and the description of its situation by the colonial surveillance apparatus. The need to reduce the scale of Pahang's disturbances through such reporting may actually suggest a 'specific colonial temporality and textuality of that space between enunciation and address'.[77]

Based on the examples provided above, it seems evident that the European writers of the news reports had limited encounters with the natives of Pahang, relying as they did mainly on second-hand accounts and reports on the various expeditions. Not all these were directly involved in the colonial administration of Pahang or part of the ongoing security operations.[78] But the disturbances had resulted in growing mistrust of the Malays as reported in the *Singapore Free Press*, where there was a 'prevalent feeling of alarm' about the security of the Pahang Corporation Mines since Malay forces could not be counted on to remain loyal to the administration.[79] The reporting which took place during and after the Pahang Civil War was really a means of disseminating a colonial-style discourse rather than attempting to depict the reality of the situation on the ground in Pahang. It has been argued that these challenges were the result of the slow process of

74 Straits Times 1895.
75 Spurr 1993: 78; Alatas 1977: 2.
76 Ahmad 2016: 43; Spurr 1993: 14.
77 Bhabha 1994: 135.
78 Alatas 1977: 72.
79 Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser 1892b.

replacing the traditional ruling system of Pahang with that of the colonial administration. This inhibited the ability of the British colonial government to bring its power to bear against the Malay chiefs and villagers. As the Chinese had dominated tin- and gold-mining operations in Pahang since the 1840s and 1850s, the British had devoted more attention to expanding their revenue through the exploitation of Chinese mining and agriculture. The sale of opium and the imposition of tin duties were the key revenue earners here. Having focused most of their attention on these economic sectors, the British administration perceived the Malay community as one which could be conveniently overlooked. This policy of 'benign neglect' eventually became the root cause of the civil war.[80]

That said, the notion of the civil war being 'petty' and 'little' can be disputed. Where better to start than by highlighting the weaknesses found in British forces themselves. Since the Malays were deemed to be untrustworthy or subject to the authority of their local *penghulu* (village heads), it was difficult to raise an effective native contingent. This necessitated the recruitment of Sikhs instead,[81] a situation which explains why John Pickersgill Rodger, the British Resident of Pahang, had such a small force at his disposal in the run-up to the civil war. The absence of a formidable organized police force can be attributed to Bahaman's landmark protest against the setting up of the Lubuk Terua station in December 1890.[82] In fact, it was documented that the Pahang police force numbered only about 300 Sikh policemen. Not only did this mean that they could not cope with the frequency of skirmishes, but also that they struggled to man the sixteen new police stations which had been built by the end of 1891.[83] Nonetheless, by the penultimate year of the civil war (1894) there had been a significant growth of the force. The available police numbered 951, comprising some 685 Sikhs and 266 Malays, in addition to the Perak Armed Police commanded by the formidable Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Sandilands Frowd Walker (1850-1917), commandant of the First Perak Sikhs. But even with these developments, Walker stated that the force was 'not sufficient to meet the requirements of the State or the demands made on the men'. Many of the policemen were 'overworked' to the point that they could not continue to discharge their duties properly. There were calls to increase the number of the Perak Sikhs and summon the Imperial Service Contingent, but such appeals were severely

80 Gopinath 1996: 8-10; Nonini 1992: 48.
81 Ibid.: 114.
82 De Silva 1962: 18; Gopinath 1996: 111.
83 De Silva 1962: 23, 29.

criticized by other British writers.[84] Much attention was drawn to Rodger's incompetence in scotching the rebellion at its inception. He was accused of being a 'round man in the square hole': stubborn, not determined enough, and only capable of 'egregious folly'.[85] Perhaps by describing the civil war in ways which made it appear altogether less dire than the reality, the news reports may have had another agenda. They reflected the frustrations of nineteenth-century strategies of surveillance, debasement and appropriation which aimed to dominate 'incalculable' natives by postulating illusions about colonized subjects.[86]

As stated earlier the ceremonial role of the raja was inherently political. It could therefore be used by the colonizer to attain specific outcomes. The *surat kuasa* (letter of authority) was essential to the prestige and authority of the Malay chiefs, outlining their rights, powers and duties. In fact, the *surat kuasa* was seen to be one of the key causes of Pahang's repeated history of disturbances, as chiefs often used it as a means of declaring war with each other.[87] The letter explicitly laid out the criteria for the recruitment and promotion of the Malay chiefs. Thus, when Bahaman was accused of writing an 'exceedingly insulting and threatening letter' to Temerloh's magistrate, expressing his grievances over the establishment of the Lubuk Terua police station, the Resident and other colonial officers perceived the gesture as one of 'continued defiance'. Rodger encouraged the sultan to sign a decree stripping Bahaman of his official title by way of punishment.[88] Hugh Clifford, then serving as British Agent in Pahang, remarked at a Royal Council meeting in the sultan's capital at Pekan in October 1891 that 'it is clear that any person disobeying Your Highness' Government is guilty of treason and merits punishment'. Bahaman had also failed to adhere to the terms and conditions negotiated at Pulau Tawar in 1891 and had ignored the sultan's demands on tax collection. While this might have been enough for Sultan Ahmad to strip Bahaman of his title, Gopinath argues that the sultan's action could also be interpreted as a form of indirect retaliation against the British. After all, the dismissal did nothing to tame Bahaman's subversive behaviour. Instead, he went into open rebellion at the end of 1891 which ultimately set the Pahang Civil War into motion.[89]

84 Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser 1894c.
85 Daily Advertiser 1892; Straits Times 1892.
86 Bhabha 1994: 141.
87 Gopinath 1996: 52-53.
88 Ibid.: 133.
89 Ibid.: 135; Andaya and Andaya 1984: 169.

The Colonial Imaginary of Racial Differences in the Pahang Civil War as Seen in the Writings of Hugh Clifford

This section will explore the role of fiction in the reimagining of events of the civil war. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the British administrator, Hugh Clifford, was a key personality in the framing of racial differences between the Malays and the British. Much of this framing is evident in his numerous literary works which he later published on late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century British Malaya. His proximity to the conflict and the accuracy of his assessment of the Pahang Civil War has been contested by several sources. These include contemporary colonial officials and present-day historians. Much of the doubt stems from the fact that Clifford's negative portrayal of the Malays was 'drawn on the basis of cursory observations, sometimes with strong built-in prejudices, or misunderstandings and faulty methodologies'.[90] Through the allusions made to the events of the Pahang Civil War in his novel *A Prince of Malaya*, Clifford's oblique criticism of Sultan Ahmad becomes clear.

In 1883, the youthful Hugh Clifford, then just turned seventeen, arrived in Malaya as a cadet attached to the Perak colonial civil service. Through his apprenticeship under the long-serving British Resident of Perak, Sir Hugh Low (in office 1877-1889), Clifford was educated about Malay religion, culture and customs. Three years later, he was ordered to accompany the governor of the Straits Settlements, Sir Frederick Weld (in office 1880-1887), on a mission to persuade Sultan Ahmad to accept a British Agent instead of a Resident. Although this second attempt failed, Weld remained determined to get his way and he instructed Clifford to return to Pahang in 1887 in order to secure the sultan's agreement. Three months later, Clifford returned to Singapore with a letter from Ahmad inquiring about the possibility of resolving the request to accept a British Agent. Despite his reservations, the sultan ultimately agreed to the request, and this led to Clifford being appointed as the first British Agent in Pahang at the young age of 21.[91]

Clifford's mission to Pahang left a deep impression on him. It furnished him in later life with an inexhaustible store of anecdotes which he drew on for his future writings. Clifford's literary works were widely read and won him considerable fame. Indeed, he saw himself as a writer as well as a colonial administrator, claiming acquaintance with the great novelist of the eastern seas, Joseph Conrad (1857-1924), whom he regarded as a close

90 Alatas 1977: 112.
91 Smith 2001: 364-365.

friend.[92] As demonstrated in several of his writings, Clifford was extremely confident of his portrayal of Malay society, in particular of Pahang's royal circle. He attributed his familiarity with Malay society to the fact he 'saw no white face and spoke no word of my own language' for months at a time, compelling him to have a deeper appreciation of native perspectives and to treat them with 'much affection and sympathy'.[93] Other British writers perceived him as an authority on the Pahang Civil War. One report lamented the lack of attention given to Clifford's reports, stating that 'it is a pity that he was not prevailed upon to tell the story of the little war that [was] waged therein'.[94] Another described Clifford as someone whose knowledge and experience of the affairs in the Malay states was 'more varied and extensive than any other European'.[95]

Clifford's views have been described as paternalistic rather than despotic since he demonstrated a commitment to safeguarding the rights of Malays, while continuing to admonish the native rulers for not being willing to stand up for those rights.[96] However, Clifford's role in the development of Pahang during this period has been contested. Aside from not being able to 'get at the sultan' as Sir Andrew Clarke alleged, he was also criticized for not being accurate in his forecast of the likely course of the civil war.[97] A report in 1894 noted that Clifford's letters on the rebels' surrender being 'imminent' seemed inherently unlikely.[98] Another article, which condemned the handling of the civil war by the British Resident, John Pickersgill Rodger, also took a side-swipe at Clifford, remarking, 'The same, with certain reservations, may be said of his assistant, Mr. Clifford.'[99] As Gailey has highlighted, Clifford's role as the 'man on the spot' in Pahang's crisis of colonial authority was what made his observations so crucial for understanding the ways in which the discursive economy of British colonial power was developed.[100] This is what makes a further investigation of Clifford's literary career relevant. His fictional works were more often than not candid illustrations of the situations he encountered as a colonial officer in Pahang in those turbulent years. As will be demonstrated below, some of his stories were very much

92 Goh 2007: 330.
93 Lees 2009: 86.
94 Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser 1910.
95 Straits Times 1895.
96 Wynn-Williams 1993: 16-17.
97 De Silva 1962: 15.
98 Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser 1894b.
99 Straits Times 1892.
100 Gailey 1982: ix.

anchored in his experiences in Pahang. Even though filtered by the passage of time, they spoke directly to an audience which by the early twentieth century was beginning to subscribe to a very different imperial ethos. Clifford himself was also seemingly aware of this, admitting that writing these stories 'wore the guise of fiction' and were 'for the most part relations of sober fact'.[101]

Clifford's attitude towards the Malays was not a straightforward one. It 'ranged from disgust and condemnation, to admiration and a paternalistic concern for their dignity and survival'.[102] In order to unravel the complexities of his construction of Malay identity, an analysis of the literary representation of his complicated relationship with Sultan Ahmad – captured in his novel *A Prince of Malaya* (1926) – would be instructive. The story revolves around the life of a Malay prince named Saleh, who spent his youth receiving an English education in Britain. At the beginning, Saleh's education was deemed a success as he started adopting the traits and mannerisms of an English gentleman. He falls in love with a middle-class Englishwoman, who later admits to entertaining him out of pity. Heartbroken by her rejection and the sense of otherness he experiences in British society, Saleh returns to Malaya only to realize that he no longer feels a true sense of belonging among his own people. He eventually leads a rebellion against the British and the ruler of the kingdom of Pelesu. When the rebellion is finally suppressed, Saleh runs amok and is killed by the colonial officer, Jack Norris. Norris ends the tale with the plea 'may God forgive us for our sorry deeds and for our glorious intentions'.[103] It could be argued that Clifford's story was a cautionary tale about the repercussions of attempting to modernize the Malays. It was hoped that Saleh would become a more competent leader of his own people after being taught the values of the British Empire. Instead, the degeneration that Saleh experiences suggests that the changes he had embraced were merely superficial. As Clifford wrote: 'A Malay hasn't got the rudiments of the Englishman in him; there aren't the materials there with which to effect the transformation; all you can do is make of him an imitation, a sham, a fraud!'[104]

Clifford also compared Saleh to 'Muhammad's coffin, suspended betwixt earth and heaven – unfitted by training to be a Malay raja, unsuited by nature to be an Englishman'. In his story, Clifford demonstrated a strong

101 Savage and Kong 1995: 4.
102 Smith 2001: 363.
103 Wynn-Williams 1993: 49.
104 Lees 2009: 97.

aversion to the idea of natives receiving an English education because he felt that the civilizing process 'injures them morally almost as much as it benefits them materially'.[105] Evidently Clifford's depiction of Saleh's fall has extremely dark undertones. Through vivid depictions of the 'darker side' of Malay society in his novel, Clifford sought to rationalize the values of British colonial authority by arresting the meaning of 'Malayness'. Since Saleh was made to be inseparable from 'primordial attachments and beliefs', he was transformed into a subject which aided Clifford's project of pushing Pahang geographically and epistemically right up to 'the frontiers of the colonial imaginary as the last exotic outpost of Malay rebelliousness and intransigence'.[106]

In a report written in 1887, Clifford argued that the state of Pahang was suffering under an oppressive system that was the product of Sultan Ahmad's misrule. He felt that the inhabitants of Pahang feared Ahmad because he had a reputation of being 'perfectly unscrupulous and, when angry, pitiless, and because he has tortured, mutilated and murdered so many people for small offences'.[107] He also wrote about the evils of Ahmad's eldest son, Tengku Mahmud, who killed a boy on the street for sport. Clifford lamented that this reflected the sinister character of the sultan, as he did not reprimand his son for the murder. Instead, Clifford claimed that Ahmad believed Mahmud 'could never be a real Raja until he had killed a man or two'.[108] It is no wonder that Saleh was sketched in such a patronizing and pessimistic fashion. Clifford's protagonist was essentially a caricature of Ahmad, reinforcing his conviction that the British government must inevitably introduce reforms 'gradually and quietly' in Pahang to 'save the people from a system of oppression and tyranny such as can only exist under the rule of a Malay Raja'.[109]

It could, however, be argued that Clifford's jaundiced portrayal of Ahmad was also an attempt to downplay the significant role he played in enabling the rebellion. As Muhammad Haji Salleh has shown, Clifford's account of the Pahang Civil War in the novel was littered with distortions about the events that took place. For instance, Saleh was depicted as idle and 'lulled by opium and cockfights' even though Gopinath's findings show that he was 'quite resolute and knew what he was doing', especially considering the 'dual

105 Smith 2001: 372; Wynn-Williams 1993: 39-40.
106 Noor 2011: 61-62.
107 Smith 2001: 365.
108 Gopinath 1996: 59.
109 Smith 2001: 366.

role' he played in the rebellion.[110] One particular example which reinforces this view was when the governor successfully managed to induce the sultan to leave Pulau Tawar and come to Pekan. The incident was interpreted as Ahmad creating an impression of disassociating himself from the rebellious Malay chiefs. The British hoped that this would discourage the rebels from continuing their struggle, and also implied that Ahmad had finally submitted to their authority.[111] However, in spite of Ahmad agreeing to lead the assault in Semantan, this did not stop him from allowing Bahaman to fight in his name, even after stripping the chief of his title and privileges. Gopinath has noted that Ahmad's ambivalent attitude was probably motivated by a desire to maintain his sovereignty.[112] It is also important to note that Clifford was part of the 1892 expedition to Semantan and that his description of the skirmish was 'a very sad and gross simplification (or even manipulation) of the events and characters involved', as Haji Salleh has pointed out.[113]

Sultan Ahmad's supposedly non-cooperative behaviour can be interpreted as a form of passive resistance, a strategic response to a very real and present threat to his power and privileges.[114] On the other hand, it can be interpreted as a form of indolence. But this would not be in character. In fact, it would be an unexpected slippage given what we know of Sultan Ahmad's talents and personality. As a Malay ruler, he was widely considered by his people to be the most capable person to end the civil war given his experience in Malay warfare and his position as raja.[115] Either way, Ahmad's contradictory responses towards the rebels and colonial officers show the difficulty in determining racial differences between the colonizer and the colonized during the course of the Pahang Civil War, for the sultan had managed to present himself as an incalculable personality which eluded simple categorizations.

It is also worth pointing out how Clifford's fictitious Prince Saleh was the unanticipated product of hybridity given Clifford's discourse of racial differences. Through this narrative device, nineteenth-century Pahang became a site clouded with romanticism about the Malays. It was also an exploration of the contradictions of importing colonial modernity inspired by Western Enlightenment.[116] As both Ali and Goh have pointed out, upon returning

110 Salleh 2009: 35.
111 De Silva 1962: 38-39.
112 Gopinath 1996: 140-141.
113 Salleh 2009: 36.
114 Gopinath 1996: 103.
115 Ibid.: 138-139.
116 Noor 2011: 62.

to Malaya Saleh became an intermediary between the colonial authorities and the Malays. He had a role to play as he navigated his Malay and British identities, besides reconciling with the dichotomies of 'the ancient, inviolate, the unreformed' and the modern.[117] The phenomena was described by Clifford as 'denationalization': a term used in his novel to refer to how the process of colonialism caused the natives to become alienated within their own communities as they took on modern Western ideals.[118] Clifford attempted to illustrate this via the analogy of the native body as a shell that contained a soul:

> The Malayan shell was there, more or less intact; a mist of nebulous memories, hovering somewhere in the background of his mind, told of a Malayan past; but within the lad the Malayan soul lay dead, or slumbering, and in its stead had been born the soul of a clean-minded, honest-thinking, self-respecting Englishman, possessed of many of the virtues and not a few of the limitations of its kind.[119]

The quote above suggests that the meaning of both 'Malayness' and 'Britishness' were being challenged and contested, while rendering the dichotomy between the two untenable. Lees notes that this marks the crucial 'slippage' between identity markers that bring to light the complexity of social relations in British Malaya at that point in time.[120] The quote above is also reminiscent of the analogy introduced by British Malaya's first Resident-General, Sir Frank Swettenham (in office 1896-1901), who compared the modernization of Malays to the tending of flowers in a garden:

> Forced plants, we know, suffer in the process; and the Malay, whose proper place is amidst the conditions of the thirteenth century, is apt to become morally weak and seedy, and to lose something of his robust self-respect, when he is forced to bear nineteenth-century fruit.[121]

Like Swettenham, Clifford's sentiments act as the 'narratorial voice' demanding that Malay royalty recognize and fulfil their role as leaders of Malay society, while conforming to the colonial logic he propounded in his novel *A Prince of Malaya.* It demonstrates a sense of incalculability at the same time

117 Ali 2016: 3272; Goh 2007: 330.
118 Savage and Kong 1995: 25-26.
119 Salleh 2009: 30-31.
120 Lees 2009: 79.
121 Alatas 1977: 47.

as invoking anxiety in the absolutism of colonial authority and its discourse of race and power. Sultan Ahmad's passive resistance to Clifford's expectations sparked anxiety within the British colonial establishment. At the same time, Clifford's remarks can be interpreted as a 'plea for legitimation' given that the persisting 'passivity' or unpredictable strategy of Malay resistance destabilized the certainty of colonialist ambitions during the Pahang Civil War.[122]

The 'historicist telos' contained in the discourse of Enlightenment was utilized to argue the case for colonialism. If it were to be subverted, then colonial discourse itself would be transformed into a 'nightmarish chaos'.[123] The colonizer – in this case Hugh Clifford – fully expected the colonized Malay to emulate him by displaying industriousness while at the same time accepting his status as an inferior colonial subject. The persistent resistance of the Malays to colonial capitalism weakened the grand narratives of modernity and civility in the colonial setting. Such forms of resistance not only challenged the certainties of colonial discourse, but led to the native subject being only partially represented.[124] Revisiting the Pahang Civil War and re-assessing the role played by Sultan Ahmad at the time can show us how the sultan's tactics were part of a strategy of native subversion which lasted throughout the conflict. They also challenged the framing of the Malay in colonial discourse on a number of levels.[125]

Conclusion: The Discursive Economy of British Colonial Power in Nineteenth-Century Pahang

The Pahang Civil War (1891-1895) was an event that shaped the understanding of racial difference in British Malaya. It was during the war that the colonial authorities began to develop and accumulate data and knowledge about Malay society. This in turn informed their governance of British Malaya at the end of the nineteenth century. A comparative analysis of the different accounts of the conflict written at the time shows that there was in fact a debate over who the real victors were. While most of the writings on the conflict have sought to explain the civil war from the viewpoint of the British colonial administration, in this chapter I have tried to question the colonial reproduction of ideas about traditional Malay politics and the image of Malays.

122 Bhabha 1994: 141-142.
123 Ibid.: 79.
124 Tibile 2012: 88.
125 Goh 2007: 324; Bhabha 1994: 139.

This chapter has looked at colonial-era reporting on the Pahang Civil War as an extension of the machinery of colonial discourse. Recurrent discursive strategies such as downplaying the situation in Pahang as a 'little' or 'petty' war, the repeated devaluation of Malay fighters, and the insistence on the eventual victory of empire, exhibit the extent to which British commentators and journalists at the time were consciously engaged in discursive construction. The result of these efforts was the depiction of the state of Pahang as a land in dire need of redemption and one which only colonial intervention could save from itself. Such views would later be reinforced in the works of fiction produced by the likes of Hugh Clifford, whose novel *A Prince of Malaya* added yet another layer of misrepresentation and selective appropriation to the framing of the Malays.

Though 'colonialism [was] a relationship of domination and difference, with race constituted as a primary marker of difference' as Mahmud has noted,[126] the British colonial discourse on the Malays could not be rendered fixed, stable and legitimate at the turn of the nineteenth century. Arguments around the 'incalculability' and 'hybrid' characteristics of Malay figures like Sultan Ahmad and Dato' Bahaman during the Pahang Civil War – who were seen as loyal yet disloyal, civil yet uncivil, cooperative yet uncooperative – suggest that there were constant slippages in the colonialist discourse focused on framing the Malays as the indolent native Other. These instances of slippage, which render impossible any attempt to frame the native Other in a permanently disabling light, also provide us with openings through which historical events such as the Pahang Civil War can be seen in a new light and re-interpreted as instances of native resistance to the colonial logic of racial difference and identity construction.

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126 Mahmud 1999: 1220.

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6 'Smoked Yankees', 'Wild' Catholics and the Newspaper 'Lions' of Manila

The Multiplicity of Race in the Philippine-American War

Brian Shott

Abstract
When the United States declared war on Spain in 1898, American troops battled Spanish forces in Cuba and across the Pacific in Spain's longtime colony, the Philippines. There, American troops initially fought alongside Filipino rebels, but after the defeat of Spanish forces the United States annexed the islands and fighting broke out between the rebels and their new occupiers. American soldiers, including nearly 6,000 African Americans, struggled to understand their adversaries, employing varied conceptual frames that mixed scientific racism, the notion of Manifest Destiny, and American exceptionalism and that encompassed long-standing fault lines in American identity, including religion. The chapter draws material from diaries of soldiers, black and ethnic newspaper presses, and diplomatic sources to describe a potent but ephemeral mix of racialist thinking during and immediately after the Philippine-American War.

Keywords: Philippine-American War, race, Catholicism, Irish American, African American, newspapers

In February 1899, in the United States, Rudyard Kipling's poem 'The White Man's Burden', printed in *McClure's Magazine*, became a cultural sensation. Newspapers quickly reprinted the work, which Kipling subtitled 'The United States and the Philippine Islands', bringing the poem to more than one million US readers and making its title a popular catchphrase for the nation's turn-of-the-century expansionist drive. Kipling urged America to 'take up the White Man's burden', 'fill full the mouth of Famine', and 'bid

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the sickness cease'. Filipinos, those to be uplifted, were a dark, mysterious race, 'half-devil and half-child'.[1] Following the quick defeat of Spanish forces in Cuba in the Spanish-American War just months previously, political cartoonists had already responded to the nation's newfound expansive power by drawing Uncle Sam standing with John Bull and the other big boys of imperialism. Uncle Sam, in these depictions, often looked across the Pacific to new frontiers. Other cultural productions evolved to join in celebrating this new turn in American power; Buffalo Bill's Wild West shows, for example, replaced 'Custer's Last Fight' against American Indians with Teddy Roosevelt's charge up Cuba's San Juan Hill.[2]

The United States would defeat Spanish troops in the Philippines with equal ease. Yet, in a matter of months, US forces would begin a brutal guerilla war in the Philippines against independence-minded Filipino 'insurgents', and Congressional hearings on US troop atrocities there would soon be front-page news. By 1901, the New York City-based *American Hebrew* would comment on Kipling's 'dethronement' by literary critics, describing a country tired of the whole range of Western colonial wars, from the Philippines to Southern Africa:

> We are emerging from the jingo woods. […] [P]eople are considering the meaning of Spanish wars, reconcentrados, Mauser bullets, canned beef, Macabebees. […] Kipling expressed a temporary aberration in morals. And now we are getting sick of war, bloodshed, riot, and burning of homesteads.[3]

It was a sea change in public opinion. Just weeks after the poem's debut in early 1899, Kipling had fallen ill during a visit to New York and worried crowds had gathered outside his hotel to pray.[4] Yet even at the height of the popularity of Kipling's poem, a significant minority of mainstream newspaper

1 For the full poem, see 'Rudyard Kipling, The White Man's Burden, 1899', in Modern History Sourcebook, Internet History Sourcebooks Project, Fordham University, https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/kipling.asp.

2 Slotkin 1994: 175-176.

3 *American Hebrew*, 30 August 1901. "Macabebees" refers to the Macabebe or Philippine Scouts, a military organization composed of Filipinos and organized by the US military. The German Mauser rifle and bullets were used by the Dutch in the South African War, which the *American Hebrew* watched closely.

4 Anderson 1981: 58. Such prominence given to a poet or a poem seems peculiar today. But in the nineteenth century, according to Matthew Frye Jacobson, there was a common link between 'nationalizing ideals and galvanizing poetics'. Novelists and poets 'become guardians of the language itself. […] [T]heir artistic merit reflects no less than the "national genius"; and their creations tap and represent the "national memory".' That a poet from Britain could be embraced so strongly by Americans points to the Anglo-American alliance. See Jacobson 2002: 94.

commentators read it as a critique of imperialism, not its celebration (a close reading reveals intriguing reversals in the stanzas; in one, the colonizer appears enslaved and serving the colonized).[5] Other, non-mainstream presses, particularly ethnic and African American weekly newspapers, added their own opinions on expansion. 'The author of the "White Man's Burden" is seriously ill in New York with pneumonia', the African American *Savannah Tribune* wrote in 1899. '[H]is piece of poetry has given many an opportunity of speaking about imaginary burdens.'[6] New York's widely circulated *Irish World*, run by Irish American activist Patrick Ford (1837-1913), described Kipling's visit as an attempt to create an Anglo-American alliance, called him a 'rabid British imperialist' and printed a verse from an older Kipling poem that it said had depicted the American bald eagle as an 'unclean bird' lying with carrion.[7]

Such misgivings were not enough to stop US annexation of the Philippines on 6 February 1899, when the United States Congress approved the Treaty of Paris, whereby Spain gave up all rights to Cuba and surrendered Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines to the United States for US$20 million. The Philippines would not gain full independence from the United States until 1946. But these dislocations point to fractures in American power at the end of the nineteenth century, fault lines that followed the nation's thrust into the Caribbean and the Pacific that threatened to destabilize its imperial agendas. A heterogeneous nation partly composed of those whose families, like the Irish, had directly experienced European imperialism, or whose ancestors suffered under slavery's forced migration from Africa, would now call upon these same marginalized communities to shoulder the burdens of empire abroad. During the Philippine-American War and its aftermath, in US soldiers', editors', and politicians' attempts to understand Filipinos, race emerged as an explanatory tool linked to religion, labour, nationalism and dreams of economic development. Powerful, malleable and ever-evolving, race in these years was an ever-present but unstable frame used by multiple actors to further their goals.

A Brief but Brutal War

In 1895, when Cubans across the island began revolting against Spanish rule, Americans took note. Support in the United States was strong for the rebels, and many newspapers spread accounts of Spanish atrocities against the insurgents

5 Murphy 2010 discusses the cultural impact of Kipling's poem.
6 *Savannah Tribune,* 4 March 1899.
7 *Irish World,* 11 February 1899.

and civilians. In early 1898 the United States sent the battleship USS *Maine* to Havana's harbour in hopes of protecting the lives of Americans living in the city; a huge explosion, believed at the time to be orchestrated by Spain, sank the boat and killed hundreds of its crew. In April 1898, after much agitation for war from the 'yellow' press, the United States declared war on Spain, ostensibly to help Cubans in their uprising against the Spanish. Just one month later, across the Pacific, US Admiral George Dewey (1837-1917) destroyed the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay and prepared to attack Spanish forces in Manila.

Filipino nationalism had been gathering strength in the late-1800s, powered by a propaganda movement led by *ilustrados*, a wealthy class of Filipinos often educated in Europe, and the Katipúnan, a secret society of revolutionaries. Discovery of the Katipúnan by the Spanish resulted in the start of the Philippine Revolution, on 19 August 1896. Filipino rebels allied with the United States for a time in 1898. After the Spanish surrendered to US forces in a 'battle' for Manila that many historians see as deliberately staged by the US and Spain, a tense standoff between US troops and Filipino rebels outside the city exploded into fighting on 4 February 1899. The United States went on to battle Filipino revolutionaries on the archipelago in a brutal war that would kill 4,165 US troops and as many as 20,000 Filipino combatants, and lead to the deaths of 750,000 civilians.[8] (President Theodore Roosevelt [in office, 1901-1909] would declare fighting over on 4 July 1902, though armed resistance to the United States would continue until 1913, particularly on the southern islands).

After the Spanish defeat, President William McKinley (1843-1901; in office, 1897-1901) declared in December 1898 that US policy towards the Philippines would be one of 'benevolent assimilation'. McKinley told military officers to 'win the confidence, respect, and affection' of Filipinos by 'assuring them in every possible way that full measure of individual rights and liberties [...] substituting the mild sway of justice and right for arbitrary rule'.[9]

In the late 1890s through the early 1900s, according to historian Stuart Anderson, 'American Anglophobia' and British condescension towards the United States gave way to friendlier relations, a process powered by the doctrine of Anglo-Saxonism. Citizens and descendants of English-speaking nations, many scholars and political leaders held, had produced the most advanced civilization due to their racial and cultural superiority; these traits included 'industry, intelligence, adventurousness, and a talent for

8 Mortality figures, which for Filipino civilians include death from conditions created or exacerbated by war such as disease, come from Hunt and Levine 2012: 57-58.

9 Letter from William McKinley to Secretary of War, 21 Dec. 1898, quoted in Kramer 2006a: 110.

self-government'.[10] White soldiers' own accounts of the war often show this sense of racial superiority, but may also reveal an elaborate mix of Anglo-Saxonism, Orientalism, abolitionist admiration for black soldiers, and, with some frequency, curiosity and respect for a culture alien to their own.

The war scrapbook of Corporal Alexander J. Nicholson, who fought in the 1st Regiment, Company B (San Francisco), of the California Volunteer Infantry, is representative of many soldier accounts from the war. Nicholson described Filipinos neutrally or in a mildly condescending way when they were allied with the United States against the Spanish, and with a racist frame after they began fighting US troops in guerilla warfare. In the first months of Nicholson's scrapbook, he occasionally noted confusing cultural differences between the Filipinos he met and his fellow American soldiers. Twice in 1898, for example, Nicholson was disturbed by Filipino treatment of Spanish prisoners of war:

> Insurgents want to kill some of the [Spanish] prisoners for some reason or other, but Dewey steps in, and refuses to allow them, much to their disgust. Insurgents are mostly all Catholics, but have their own churches, priests, and have but little use for the Spanish priests. They say next to 'Christ', 'Dewey' *mucha grande* man. When he passes down the street, they all salute him, by taking off their hats and standing at attention.[11]

Two days later, Filipino fighters had brought in '8 more boat loads of prisoners' who 'had not eaten for 3 days'. The captives 'would fare very badly, were it not for Dewey'.[12] Nicholson's shock at POW treatment is perhaps a precursor of controversy around the issue for the United States and its allies in conflicts in Asia later in the twentieth century. But Nicolson had yet to explicitly employ any racial rhetoric of 'savage' vs 'civilized'.

The insurgents' belief in the protective power of amulets amused Nicholson and produced some tension between them and his comrades:

> The natives now think they are one of the greatest nations of the world, but the 'Yankees' are playing them pretty hard. They all wear church medals and try very hard to explain to us that if a bullet hits them, it will

10 Anderson 1981: 12. For a more recent examination of the 'intercolonial connections' between the United States and Britain, see Kramer 2002: 1315-1353.

11 Alexander J. Nicholson, 'Scrapbooks Relating to the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection, c. 1893-1907', Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (henceforth: 'Nicholson Scrapbooks'), 4 July 1898, p. 75.

12 Ibid.: 6 July 1898, p. 79.

> not go through, but will break, and fall at their feet, but are very much put out when we laugh at them.

But Nicholson and his men appeared to be making at least some effort to better understand Filipinos: 'We are having quite a time trying to master the language, but are having quite a lot of trouble to get any that speak Spanish at all.'[13]

By February 1899, however, the United States was fighting Filipino rebels, and Nicholson's tone changed sharply. 'Shortly after 6 a.m. Washington's left wing, assisted by Wyoming from accross [sic] the river, round out a hot-bed of Rebels, and score quite a killing. Lasted till after noon, 45 niggers piled up, and 36 Rifles captured.'[14]

A small but persistent vein of scholarship on the Philippine-American War, often from the field of military history, holds that politically biased researchers focus on US troop atrocities and racist rhetoric and neglect Filipino human rights violations and corruption, or the good-faith efforts by the United States to build schools, infrastructure and democratic political institutions. Some of this scholarship deserves engagement.[15] The letters, publications and diaries of US soldiers contain a wide range of viewpoints. What particular scholars stress from these sources may reveal more about their own outlook than the sum total of US soldier opinion in the war. (In fact, political forces in the United States partly shaped the war archive that survives today. Historian Stuart Miller suggests that the US Anti-Imperial League amplified what he suggests are relatively rare anti-war soldier accounts.[16])

It is indisputable, however, that racist epithets like those found in Nicholson's scrapbook pepper many US soldier accounts of the war. In some such accounts it becomes unclear whether any distinction is being made between civilians and Filipino fighters. Horace Smith, a young man from Utah fighting in the 4th Calvary, described a firefight in which Filipinos killed two men, a corporal and a cannoneer, but 'we fixed them [...] [by] killing twenty niggers'. Smith's group 'shelled a church, a convent, a blockhouse, a bridge, besides several houses and when they started to run we sent shrapnel after them to hurry them up a little'.[17]

13 Ibid.: 9 July 1898, pp. 83-85.

14 Ibid.: 22 February 1899, p. 41.

15 See, for example, Linn 2000. Though Linn provides examples of US-Filipino cooperation, he downplays the prevalence in the archives of US troops' and politicians' racial animosity.

16 See Miller 1982.

17 Prentiss 1900: 238.

Miller even finds that soldiers who were initially sympathetic to Filipino aspirations for independence often changed their views over time. Early in the war, Captain Matthew Arlington Batson (1866-1917), of the Pennsylvania Volunteers, who won a Medal of Honour for his actions in the war and learnt to speak Kapampangan, wrote with chagrin that US troop outposts 'will see some natives – hear a shot and they turn loose and fire on everything they see – man, woman, and child'.[18] Batson was horrified at the retaliatory destruction of 'Apolit', an idyllic Filipino village, by the 17th Infantry. But six months later, commanding a troop of Philippine Scouts composed largely of Macabebes, Pampangan rivals of the more dominant Tagalog group, Batson revelled in precisely the same destruction:

> I am king of the Macabebes and they are terrors. [...] [W]e are destroying this district, everything before us. I have three columns out, and their course is easily traced by the smoke from burning houses. Of course, no official report will be made of everything.[19]

The prevalence of accounts such as these lead historian Paul A. Kramer to describe the Philippine-American War as an 'exterminist', though not genocidal, war – a conflict in which civilians and other noncombatants 'were viewed as legitimate targets during the duration of combat but coexistence is imagined as a postwar goal'.[20]

Other soldier accounts show a sometimes contradictory mix of many of the available explanatory regimes available to Americans seeking to understand the Other in Asia around the turn of the century. Introducing a book of extracts from the letters of Captain H.L. Herndon of the 21st Infantry, American journalist and war correspondent Stephen Bonsal (1865-1951) wrote in 1906 that, though he spent two years travelling in the Far East shortly before the Spanish-American War, he failed to understand the 'political panorama' of the 'east coast of Asia' – its 'civilization in decay', 'tottering thrones and vanishing races', set before the 'colonies of the European powers, with their promise of growth and expansion'.[21] Bonsal called 'the Westward movement of our race [...] slow but irresistible, like the progress of a glacier, moving in obedience to natural laws'.[22] China 'lies before us in hopeless

18 Miller 1982: 182.
19 Ibid.: 183.
20 Kramer 2006a: 5, 172.
21 Bonsal 1900: vii.
22 Ibid.: viii.

decline'; the only question was whether its door would be 'opened to or closed upon our trade and our civilization'.[23] These are the tenets of Orientalism, as well as Manifest Destiny: Asia is imagined as exotic, inferior, feminized and weak while the United States was charged by God with bringing democracy and civilization across the North American continent and beyond.[24]

Herndon, for his part, was unimpressed with Filipinos following his arrival in Manila ('of the natives you see on the streets the less that is said is the better').[25] Yet he wrote that it was completely logical, seeing what the Spanish had done in their cruelty to the Philippines, for Filipino insurgents to 'fight to the bitter end against a people who[m] they are informed [...] will prove as merciless in victory as were the Spaniards'.[26] Joseph Ignacius Markey of the 51st Iowa Infantry was more generous towards Filipinos; he called them 'natural mechanics' who had served 'the hardest master in the world'. The Spanish taxed everything, practically the air they breathed, and 'under these conditions the people could not be expected to advance'.[27]

Sympathetic accounts by US soldiers towards Filipinos and Filipino culture do not dominate soldier accounts of the war, but neither are they difficult to find. Andrew J. Haslam, a soldier in the 51st Iowa Volunteers, seemed to hold a mix of views, some of them contradictory, about Filipinos. He called them 'an enlightened Malay race of Indians who rebelled against the tyrannical rule of an alien government', in this case meaning Spain, not the United States.[28] Commenting on the University of Santo Tomás (post-1947, Catholic University of the Philippines), founded in 1611, in Manila, Haslam wrote, 'those that were fortunate enough to obtain an education within its walls became, with but few exceptions, thorough cultivated and respectable men'. But not all graduates were honourable; many had 'an admixture of blood [...] which must have been tainted with that awful hereditary malediction, rascality, which is certain to manifest itself no matter how well and honestly they were reared'.[29]

Despite these occasional forays into racial science, Haslam paid many aspects of Filipino culture the highest of compliments. He was particularly impressed by the good behaviour of Filipino children: 'Their conduct exceeds

23 Ibid.: ix.

24 For background on American notions of the Philippines before the Philippine-American War, see Noor 2018.

25 Bonsal 1900: 293.

26 Ibid.: 297.

27 Markey 1900: 144-145.

28 Haslam 1900: 80.

29 Ibid.: 81.

by far what we term in the states as good boys'; they would, he said, become 'admirable citizen[s] under the right kind of government'. And after seeing two half-naked women casually bathing in plain sight of the street and not being harassed in any way, he asked, 'Where is there a people in the universe who live in a state of primitiveness caused by poverty having [such] a high moral and religious education?' Haslam was likewise impressed by the dresses of churchgoing women, which were woven skilfully in plant fibre.[30] 'The reports that these people are not civilized are an injustice. What greater accomplishment do social women possess at home or in any other country that boasts of top-notch civilization?'[31]

Yet Haslam, like so many other American observers of Filipinos at the turn of the century, was dismayed by Filipino work habits: 'It must be a first and prevailing idea of theirs to do as little work as possible.'[32] European perception of indolence was a central tenet of European ideas about Southeast Asians. Haslam's laziness, however, is cultural in character: 'The unexpected skill which these people possess indicate a great future for them, if they could be induced to emerge from the indolent habits to which they are addicted. [...] It seems a pity to find ability housed in total darkness, which the country and humanity are deprived of its usefulness.' Haslam blames this partly on the Spanish, whose rules, he writes, were designed to keep Filipinos in the dark.[33] (Further showing the mix of ideologies available to Americans at the turn of the century is a fascinating but brief section in Haslam's account titled 'Socialism'. Haslam is impressed that the basic tools and manufacturing processes used by Filipinos have left them masters of their own work and 'on the same social plane' with each other; they are 'manufacturer and seller independent of a factory boss; free from the dictating commands of the jobbing house'.[34])

US soldiers were acquainted with domestic debates over annexation and the war; many soldier letters and diaries show their anger at anti-war activists back home. Miller finds that although many soldiers opposed the annexation of the Philippines, believing the US should not incorporate the territory, most were eager to 'get the job done' – that is, fight and defeat Philippine resistance. The position was somewhat similar to racially charged anti-imperialism commonly expressed in debates over annexation.

30 In the Philippines, pineapple plant leaves are used to make textile fibre – *piña* – from which clothes are woven.

31 Ibid.: 93-96.

32 Ibid.: 101.

33 Ibid.: 103.

34 Ibid.: 109.

Several scholars have shown that in Congressional debate over the annexation of the Philippines in 1899, white supremacist arguments were used primarily by anti-imperialists. Citizenship, it was popularly held, must 'follow the flag'; that is, the United States was an exceptional country that would not oppress its subjects and instead grant those in newly incorporated territory some level of personal and political rights and liberty. In this view, annexation was thus opposed for it could lead to the emigration and admittance into the union of racially inferior peoples.[35] Somewhat at odds with studies that stress the isolationist impulses of white supremacy are what Paul A. Kramer deems 'cultures of United States imperialism' scholarship, which describe a new, turn-of-the-century, moment where social Darwinist philosophies and religiously inspired notions of Manifest Destiny and racial uplift worked together to push America outward towards the so-called uncivilized world – Kipling's poem fits this view.[36] Though such scholarship on US imperialism may acknowledge that anti-imperialists played the race card with more vigour than the imperialists, the overall effect still can be to downplay many Americans' racially based, grave misgivings about expansion. A difference in sources may be at work; diplomatic and congressional documents may discount a pro-expansionist 'white man's burden' atmosphere in the nation at large, while 'cultures of imperialism' scholars draw upon literature, art, advertising and world's fairs but may exclude political or diplomatic sources.[37]

Though most soldiers seemed happy to serve and fight, their negative view of Filipinos and their capacity for self-government aligned with this racially powered anti-imperialist argument. Astonishingly, some US troops claimed they could not detect any nationalism in Filipino armed resistance. Ben Harbour of the Utah Volunteers put it thus: 'To anyone who has studied the Malay character the imputation of patriotism is preposterous. They have no more patriotism than the Chinese, and no more idea of self-government than the Zulus.'[38] A. Prentiss, the editor of a compilation of soldier accounts of the war, agreed:

> From the naked Gadan, armed with bows and arrows, to [Filipino rebel leaders] [Apolinário] Mabini and [Emilio] Aguinaldo, there was not one single patriot in our sense of the word. […] The Tagalo[g] could feel enmity

35 See Lasch 1958; Love 2004; Hilfrich 2012.

36 See Kramer 2011.

37 For an examination of the disparate anti-imperialist viewpoints, see Harris 2011.

38 Prentiss 1900: 205.

> to the white man [...] aspirations after surcease from oppression and cruelties [...] revenge or of plunder [...] but definite determinations to found and maintain a civilized government of their own guaranteeing freedom, equality, protection of life and property and opportunity to pursue happiness he could not have. [...] Any competent orientalist could have told the commanding General this.[39]

While they clearly drew from long-standing European notions of essentialized racial hierarchy and difference, white soldiers' racial 'knowledge' was largely informed by a black/white racial binary in the United States and the racist justifications for most African Americans' second-class social and economic status. But because people with African heritage, as a whole, did not typically resemble Filipinos as a group, some white soldiers – especially those who consorted with or married Filipina women – compared the two groups and marked Filipinos as superior. James Blount, an officer in the US volunteers and later a US district judge in the Philippines, wrote that he had 'many warm friends among the Filipinos' and 'resented' any suggestion that he had been 'eating, drinking, dancing, and chumming with Negroes. [...] [T]he African is aeons of time behind the Asiatic in development: the latter is aeons ahead of us [Europeans] in the duration of his civilization.'[40] Many other commentators were perplexed by the many different peoples in the Philippines; Prentiss called the islands a 'racial scrap-bag of the world'.[41] (The importance of Asians in the production of racialized discourses of US citizenship will be discussed in greater detail below.)

Cartoonists of the time expressed the confusion most plainly, sometimes drawing Filipinos as they had depicted American Indian 'savages'; other times giving them the markers of black minstrelsy, complete with kinky hair and comically large lips. Booker T. Washington (1856-1915), the most prominent black leader of the time, recognized the dilemma, telling a New York City audience less than a year after the war's end that the Filipino was undergoing an 'interesting process of being carefully examined. If he can produce hair that is long enough and nose and feet that are small enough, I think the Filipino will be designated and treated as a white man; otherwise he will be assigned to my race.'[42]

39 Ibid.: 240.

40 Ngozi-Brown 1997: 50 n. 49.

41 Prentiss 1900: 161.

42 In his essay 'The Educational and Industrial Emancipation of the Negro', Washington wrote that 'I should hope that [the Filipino] [...] will not struggle through all future generations [being] considered and looked upon as a problem, instead of a man'. See Washington 1977: 87.

Black Troops and the White Man's Burden

African American troops fighting in the Philippines had their own opinions, sometimes backed up by action, about Filipinos and about their own treatment by white Americans in the islands. Attention to the black experience during and after the Philippine-American War reveals soldiers struggling against and sometimes appropriating multiple racial constructions to attempt to carve out a space of dignity and justice. T. Thomas Fortune (1856-1928), the most famous black journalist of the time and a visitor to the Philippines, wrote of America's move into the Pacific, 'If the American flag remain in the Philippines, Afro-Americans will have to be drafted to hold it up.'[43] In fact, six all-black military regiments totalling approximately 6,000 soldiers fought in the Philippines.[44] Spanish troops and possibly Filipino rebels nicknamed them 'smoked yankees'. Black US troops were not the first soldiers with African heritage to join Western colonial armies in Southeast Asia; between 1832 and 1872, the Dutch recruited more than 3,000 West Africans from the Gold Coast (post-1957 Ghana) to serve as soldiers in Java.[45]

African Americans debated service in the Spanish-American War and the Philippine-American War through their presses, and many commentators were pro-war. These commentators stuck to a long-time black strategy for American acceptance, summed up by editor, orator, and activist, Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), who had said of black soldiering during the Civil War: 'Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letter, US, let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pocket, there is no power on earth that can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship.'[46] (More than 180,000 African American soldiers fought for the Union Army in the Civil War.) Black soldiers in Cuba would, initially, receive accolades in the mainstream US press. But some black publishers felt that the US government's retreat on civil rights for African Americans – the beginnings of Jim Crow laws and the terror of lynchings – demanded refusal of military service until the domestic civil rights situation improved. The *Richmond Planet* of Virginia made racial common cause with Filipinos, employing a black/white binary: 'England has sent black men to fight for

43 Fortune 1904a: 97. For a recent look at Fortune's trip to Hawaii and the Philippines, see Shott 2019: 93-129.

44 See Marasigan 2010: 1-2.

45 See Van Kessel 2005.

46 Douglass 1991: 161.

white men's rights in South Africa, and the United States has sent black men to take away black men's rights in the Philippine Islands. In both cases, the blacks get the worst end of the job.'[47] The disruption that the 'Malay race' would cause to this racial binary is discussed below. But, as will also be shown, 'Negro' and 'Asian' had already been in tentative relationship with each other, due to the Chinese presence in the American West.

Black editors' critique of Anglo-Saxonism and opinion of Filipinos was also shaped and constrained in part by their domestic fight against Bishop Henry McNeal Turner (1834-1915) and other advocates of voluntary black migration to Africa, called colonization. In describing Filipinos and Africans, the black press could critique the racialized binary of 'civilization' and 'savagery' but might also employ those terms with little modification. For example, *The Freeman*, an African American weekly in Indianapolis, Indiana, that did not support colonization, called Africa a 'grand old gloomy continent', and Liberia a 'foster child of American philanthropy'. Sounding particularly Darwinian, the editors in October 1899 wrote that '[e]very race is striving to secure the sum total of good to the individual and to the species.' Otherwise, 'civilization would slink back to its primary condition'. Yet, regarding Bishop Turner's call for African emigration for black Americans, there was not 'sufficient unrest apart from that which usually accompanies evolution to warrant this whole self-deportation'. In Liberia, *The Freeman* claimed, 'there is wider divergence between the American descended blacks and the blacks of the bush than between the whites and blacks of America'.[48]

Especially as it followed the concurrent South African War (1899-1902), some in the turn-of-the-century black press linked Western civilization to progress and human rights. Most editors were quick to remind their readers and white America that in Southern Africa a majority black population resided among the two combatants, the British and the Dutch Boer. But it was the British who presumably would benefit black Africans the most. In an editorial titled, 'Boers and Slavery', *The Freeman* wrote that as Great Britain was clearly fighting for 'equality of rights' for its British subjects, it should be 'humanely concerned about the natives in her domain', for 'the air of the British Empire is too pure for a slave to breathe'.[49] The *Colored American* agreed. Though African Americans, like the Dutch Boer, were in favour of self-government, the paper wrote that 'even that sacred principle can be abused and misapplied'. It was not the Boer, but the British, the

47 *Richmond Planet*, 21 October 1899.

48 *The Freeman,* 23 September 1899; 17 November 1900; 7 October 1899; 17 November 1899.

49 *The Freeman*, 28 October 1899.

'friends of progress', who have 'always carried better conditions with [their] flag'. England was the 'pioneer of progressive government', the 'friend of the dark races', and had 'built up many of the waste places of the earth'.[50]

When it came to the Philippine-American War, *The Freeman* looked upon Filipinos through this civilizationist lens. In February 1899, it wrote that Filipinos were 'possessed with much pride and independence of spirit and have some notions of government', but 'the bushmen of today cannot be the legislator of tomorrow'. America here appeared to take the role of Britain in Southern Africa. 'The utmost our country could consistently do would be to give them the best form of government possible under the circumstances [...] and when they can maintain that, [...] then the staying hand of America might be withdrawn.'[51]

Black commentators who saw military service as a strategy to achieve full citizenship rights were likely pleased with initial public response to African American regiments in Cuba. Though the Army did not allow black soldiers to be led by black officers, white officers, including Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919), former assistant secretary of the Navy (1897-1898) and commander of the 1st United States Volunteer Cavalry (June-August 1898), reported favourably on black performance in the brief war in Cuba. Black soldiers had fought in the battles of Las Guasimas (24 June 1898) and San Juan Hill (1 July 1898) and had acted courageously, according to Roosevelt (who would later reverse his account) and other officers. A collection of wartime stories and documents written in 1899 printed a poem by B.M. Channing celebrating black soldiers' valour in Cuba titled, 'The Negro Soldier' (1898).

> We used to think the negro didn't count for very much,
> Light-fingered in the melon patch, and chicken yard, and such,
> Much mixed in point of morals and absurd in point of dress,
> The butt of droll cartoonists and target of the press;
> But we've got to reconstruct our views on color, more or less,
> Now we know about the Tenth at La Guasima!

The black soldier, Channing wrote, had 'showed himself another type of man'; black soldiering in the Spanish-American War might even end forever lingering divisions from the Civil War, for the 'feud' of 'the blue coat and the grey' was 'done forever' due to 'La Guasima' (Las Guasimas).[52] In fact, one black soldier who fought at Las Guasimas, Captain John Buck of the

50 *Colored American*, 14 April 1900, p. 8.
51 "Expansion or No Expansion," *The Freeman*, 4 February 1899, p. 4.
52 'The Negro Soldier', in Channing 1900: 223.

10th Cavalry, would participate in an important capture of one of Filipino rebel leader Emilio Aguinaldo's (1869-1964) principal advisors – Apolinário Mabini (1864-1903) – on 10 December 1899 in Nueva Ecija.[53]

In *A History of the Utah Volunteers*, editor A. Prentiss described the actions of black troops in Cuba similarly, calling the 24th Infantry 'the most famous regiment of African blood since Hannibal slaughtered 70,000 Romans at the Battle of Lake Trasamene [217 BC]'.[54] Prentiss included a letter from General Jacob Ford Kent (1835-1918), who led the regiment between May and December 1898, and described his troops' 'nobility of character' and 'pre-eminent moral courage' and assured the editor that in the Philippines the 24th was 'continuing the work so nobly begun by their white brothers'.[55]

But a longer war in a more alien part of the world would complicate Frederick Douglass's martial route towards African American citizenship and acceptance. The black press tried to gauge race relations in America's new Asian possession, reprinting many letters from black soldiers in the Philippines. Some soldiers rarely mentioned race at all and spoke with pride about their service or expressed anger at the enemy forces, just as many white soldiers did. Chaplain Theophilus Gould Steward (1843-1924) of the 25th Infantry, when cursed by three white privates on a street in Manila, seemed to revel in his apparent authority to stop, intimidate and reprimand his antagonists: He 'read them a lecture', he told a black weekly back home.[56] At least in this instance, military rank appeared to redraw the American colour line. Just two years after the official end of the war, the *Colored American* remained optimistic, claiming that black soldiers in the Philippines 'speak well of the treatment they received there, and the cordial relations between them and the natives'. Though most teachers and civilian clerks in the Philippines were white, they 'seem to forget their American prejudice, when they meet a colored officer. […] [T]he race question is rapidly resolving itself in the islands.'[57]

But although the race question might evolve, it did not appear to be headed to any egalitarian resolution in the Philippines. Many other black troops reported, as John W. Galloway of the 24th did, that 'the whites have begun to establish their diabolical race hatred in all its home rancor in Manila'.[58] Fortune, the black journalist visiting Manila, agreed, pointing the finger at

53 Marasigan 2010: 151.

54 Prentiss 1900: 125.

55 Ibid.: 126-127.

56 *The Gazette* (Cleveland), 21 April 1900, quoted in Gatewood 1971: 263-264.

57 'Out in the Philippines', *Colored American*, 16 January 1904, p. 7.

58 John W. Galloway (24th Infantry, San Isidro, Philippines), 30 December 1899, quoted in Gatewood 1971: 252.

US Southerners appointed to high positions in the military and government. He wrote to his friend Booker T. Washington, 'No southern white man should be allowed to hold office in the Philippines. […] The Filipinos hate the whole tribe of southerners here, and so do I.'[59] Still, Fortune was hopeful that African Americans could emigrate to the islands and find a better life there.

The African American strategy of asserting US citizenship and patriotism during wars of empire sat uncomfortably with injustices at home, most significantly the mob justice taking place primarily in the US South. 'Remember the Maine!' *The Freeman* had announced during the Spanish-American War, lending its support to US involvement in Cuba, 'but […] we should really be lamenting our own lost ones, who are being cruelly murdered every day'.[60] Historian Rayford Logan (1897-1982) dubbed the time period between the end of Reconstruction in 1877 and the early twentieth century the 'nadir' of race relations in the United States, marked by lynchings and the beginning of legalized segregation. In 1896, in *Plessy vs Ferguson*, a dispute over separate rail coaches for African Americans, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of segregation. Even Roosevelt, who had seemed initially to back African American rights and had spoken highly of black troops in Cuba, quickly revised his opinion of black performance there. By 1906, when Roosevelt was president (in office 1901-1909), he would dash black hopes by dismissing without investigation and on dubious grounds three companies of black regular troops accused of involvement in a race riot in Brownsville, Texas. Progressives like Roosevelt often supported segregation as a kind of 'shield' to protect their reform projects from social strife.[61]

The African American press fought back during the nadir. Though they could employ the same civilizationist rhetoric as white Americans when it came to Africa or the Philippines, black journalists also frequently turned that discourse on its head, especially when reporting on lynchings. White people, black commentators increasingly reported, were in danger of regressing into savages. Reporting on a Georgia double-lynching in February 1899, the *Savannah Tribune* called the murders the most brutal in a 'supposed to be civilized community' and charged the participants with 'competing with the cannibals of remote islands of the seas'.[62] Two months later, after the lynching of Sam Holt (a.k.a. Sam Hose, 1875-1899) near Newnan, Georgia,

59 Letter from T. Thomas Fortune to Booker T. Washington, 26 February 1903 (Washington 1977: 100.)

60 *The Freeman,* 9 July 1898.

61 See McGerr 2005.

62 *Savannah Tribune,* 18 February 1899.

the *Savannah Tribune* returned to the theme, stating that lynchers, who had tortured Holt and taken pieces of his body as souvenirs, were 'drifting into a state of cannibalism'. The *Savannah Tribune* ran anti-lynching excerpts from ten black papers on 6 May 1899; more than half performed similar inversions, suggesting that the white lynchers were the 'real savages' of the civilized world.[63]

Filipino rebels, for their part, were well aware of the tricky position of African American soldiers during the Philippine-American War and directed propaganda their way. Sam Holt's lynching was an opening. White soldiers reported seeing flyers, produced by rebels and targeting African American troops, that urged black soldiers to 'consider your history', 'take charge that the blood of Sam Hose proclaims vengeance', and defect.[64]

Some black soldiers did defect to the rebels; the most famous was David Fagen (b. Tampa, Florida, 1875), who left the 24th Infantry in San Isidro in November 1899, joined rebel forces and rose to the rank of captain. He taunted US Commander Frederick ('Fighting Fred') Funston (1865-1917) by writing him several letters and fought US troops for about two years before possibly being captured and killed – though his body was never positively identified.[65]

Remarkably, the US Army, while fearing potential affinities between blacks and Filipinos, may have occasionally capitalized on positive relations between the two. The research of Filipina historian Cynthia Marasigan suggests that in some instances, the US military may have used black soldiers to better gather information on the insurgency or to pacify town and countryside with less violence due to the greater trust sometimes shown to them by Filipinos compared with white American servicemen.[66]

African Americans, Asians, and Religion: The Interplay of Race and Rights

The racialization of both African Americans and Asian peoples had already been in dynamic interaction in the late nineteenth century. In supporting Chinese exclusion, whites might describe African Americans as a 'problem',

63 Ibid.: 6 May 1899.

64 Marasigan 2010: 75, 87, 94, 95.

65 For more on the fascinating story of David Fagen, see Morey 2019; Robinson and Schubert 1975; Ontal 2002; and Marasigan 2010: 1-2, 184-187, 351-353.

66 See Marasigan 2010: chap. 5.

another of which (the 'Chinese problem') Americans surely did not want. Or, in yet another construction, African Americans could be cast positively in comparison to the Chinese: commentators, both black and white, typically referred to black Americans' Christianity, common language and similar customs to whites and contrasted those characteristics with 'heathen' Chinese 'clinging' to their own language and habits. Even Judge John Marshall Harlan's (1833-1911) eloquent dissenting opinion in *Plessy vs Ferguson*, in which he argued for equality of all before the law and against the 'separate but equal' doctrine of segregation, used the Chinese as a foil. How, Harlan asked, could the statute in question permit the Chinese, a race 'so different from our own' that it was excluded from citizenship, to ride with whites on train cars and yet exclude African Americans, 'many of whom perhaps risked their lives for the preservation of the Union'? Harlan, scholar Helen H. Jun writes, 'used Orientalist difference to assimilate US blacks into a universalizing American national identity', a surprising discourse of 'black inclusion/Chinese exclusion'.[67]

A few decades before the Philippine-American War, at the time of Reconstruction (1863-1877), the discussion in the United States around citizenship was similarly a multiracial one that put religion in conversation with race – 'heathen' and 'savage' revolved around each other closely in a 'multiregional, multiracial, transnational process of national reimagining and reconstitution'.[68] The racially diverse Western US, with its Native American and Chinese populations, white ethnic immigrant communities, and African Americans, ensured that debate over ratification of the Civil Rights Act of 1866, the so-called Reconstruction Amendments (the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, designed to secure full citizenship to freed slaves), and the Naturalization Act of 1870, would go beyond the black/white racial dyad and encompass Orientalism and religion.

During this 'crucial moment of constitutional engineering',[69] notions of Chinese and Native American heathenism came to the fore to restrict the scope of full citizenship rights to white and African American males. Western congressmen deliberately crafted the Civil Rights Act of 1866, which addressed equal protection under the law, to make sure its language did not grant citizenship to the vast majority of Native Americans and Chinese immigrants. Citizenship was extended 'to all persons born in the United States, and not subject to any foreign power'; explicitly excluded

67 Jun 2011: 16.
68 See Paddison 2015: 196.
69 Ibid.: 184.

were 'Indians not taxed' – that is, almost all Native Americans (a small number of 'taxed' Indians had formally renounced their sovereignty rights).

Radical Republicans, at the time still advocating strongly for African Americans, knew that the Civil Rights Act might be deemed unconstitutional and quickly moved to amend the Constitution with the Fourteenth Amendment, which addressed citizenship rights and equal protection under the law and nullified the *Dred Scott* case (1857), which had explicitly denied citizenship to African Americans. They followed this with the Fifteenth Amendment, designed to guarantee black male voting rights. Again, in arguments over ratification of the amendments, Western politicians worried that citizenship and suffrage would be granted to Indians and Chinese, and debate once again pulled religion and 'paganism' or 'heathenism' into the conversation.

'The Chinese are nothing but a pagan race', railed California Republican Representative William Higby (1813-1887; in office 1863-1869). 'They bring their clay and wooden gods with them to this country, and [...] we allow them to bow down and worship them'.[70] Republican advocates for black rights repeatedly contrasted the Chinese with African Americans, whom they described as Christian and fully American.

African Americans, desperate to secure their personal safety and civil rights, could not avoid participating in these racial dynamics. Although most black newspapermen argued against the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, seeing race-based immigration restrictions as potentially dangerous to their own citizenship status, the black press had long exoticized the Chinese, showing a particular fascination with Chinatowns. Articles in *The Elevator*, a San Francisco-based black paper that argued against Chinese exclusion, often started with a kind of caveat to readers: '[W]e honestly confess that we have no sympathy for the Chinese. Their habits, customs, modes of living, manner of worship [...] is an abhorrence to us.'[71]

But American moves towards a hoped-for empire in the Pacific could scramble this black/Chinese racial dyad with more positive views of Chinese and sometimes Asian culture more broadly. At least two factors seem to have contributed to an oftentimes more 'positive' outlook on the Chinese among many American colonizers in the Philippines. A missionary tradition that might still look upon Chinese civilization with some respect and upon Chinese conversion with continued hope was a factor. But the most prevalent

70 *Congressional Globe*, 39th Congress, First Session, 1056 (Paddison 2015: 187).

71 'Have the Chinese Any Rights Which Americans Are Bound to Respect', *Elevator*, 24 May 1873, quoted in Jun 2006: 1061.

'positive' racialization of the Chinese was due to the need for agricultural (and in smaller part, household) labour.

In both Hawaii and the Philippines, American agriculturalists and entrepreneurs alike saw Chinese labour as integral to economic development. In the imagined racial characteristics of this new construction, African Americans might lose their favourable status. For example, the American soldier press in Manila – lively and virulently racist weeklies staffed in large part by US servicemen during and after the war – saw Chinese as hard workers and African Americans as thieves. In a 1903 editorial titled, 'Chinese Are Wanted, but No Negroes', the *Manila American* declared, 'We do not want any more negroas [sic] in the Philippines. He is here now, and we are having all sorts of trouble with him.' Though 'quite a number' of African Americans on the islands were 'shining examples' of success, the *Manila American* wrote, too many had become 'vagrants', exploiters of Filipina women and members of 'bands of highwaymen [...] commonly called "ladrones"'.[72]

Unlike James Henderson Blount (1869-1918), the soldier who saw Filipinos as included in a larger conception of storied and respectable Asian civilizations, Filipinos did not fare any better in either the *Manila American* or the *Manila Freedom*, another soldier paper based in Manila. The *Manila Freedom* favoured the Chinese due to what it characterized as the racial inferiority of Filipinos. 'We are here, supposedly', the paper wrote, 'to help the Filipino climb up the ladder of success. [...] We have seen their shortcomings so often that we have rather grown to despise the little brown man, with his timid ways. [...] The Filipino is a Malay, and will never get over that crowning misfortune.'[73] Like the *Manila American* and the planter press on Hawaii, the *Manila Freedom* sought an exemption to Chinese exclusion for America's new colonies so that Chinese labour could be imported. To the soldier press in Manila, any attempt to uplift Filipinos was futile.

Strongly opposing 'Filipinization' – the appointment of Filipinos to the Commission government, established in 1901 with William Howard Taft (1857-1930) as civil governor (1901-1904) – put the soldier press at odds with US policy in the islands, which after the war was more paternalistic and less outwardly virulent in its racism towards Filipinos. Commissioner Taft, later to become the 27th president of the United States (1909-1913), took note of these 'young lions of the American press' in a 1903 speech at Union Reading College in Manila. The cruel guerilla war, Taft said, meant that most in the

72 'Chinese Are Wanted, but No Negroes', *Manila American*, 10 February 1903.

73 'Give Them a Chance', *Manila Freedom*, 23 February 1903.

soldier press still hated the Filipino: 'The Anglo-Saxon is not noted for [...] his consideration for races for which he considers inferior to his.' Taft went on to describe the economics of the soldier press. With 70,000 troops in the Philippines during the war, press profits from advertising were sound. But with reduced troop levels, American weeklies in Manila were realizing they should have established more business ties with Filipinos. 'The pinch is being felt', Taft said, and the lions responded defensively by blaming the Commission government and its policy of 'encouraging the native as far as it could'.[74]

Censorship of all newspapers in Manila, American and Filipino alike, also contributed to the ill feeling between the soldier press and the government. Military censorship lasted from 1899 through 1901 and under the Commission government, censorship continued under the Sedition Act of November 1901. Censors monitored books, newspapers and plays for hints of any advocacy of Philippine 'independence or separation' from the United States.[75] But censors also watched the lions of the soldier press and could crack down with the Sedition Act and other legal tools, including a libel law passed in 1901. Though the most famous censorship case involved the Filipino newspaper *El Renacimiento* (an editorial, 'Birds of Prey', lambasted Commission government member, Dean Worcester [1866-1924; in office 1899-1913]), editors at both the *Manila Freedom* and the *Manila American* also fought against libel suits or sedition charges for criticizing the civil government. The laws, according to William Crozier of the *Manila American*, frightened many editors; the 'abject fear of the censor lost to the [*Manila*] *American* [...] many of the best stories of those days'.[76] Censorship only confirmed to the American press in Manila that the civil government was hiding its unsound and corrupt nature, much of which, these editors thought, stemmed from US partnership with Filipinos, a 'servile race', according to Crozier.[77]

Published books also got under Taft's skin and further reveal considerable tension between the US military and the Commission. One American author particularly riled the future US president. Charles Ballentine (b. c. 1861), writing under the pseudonym Edgar G. Bellairs, dedicated his 1902 book *As It Is in the Philippines* to the US military, 'with the firm conviction that the views of the large majority are expressed in this volume'. Ballentine portrayed

74 Taft's speech is reprinted in Devins 1905: 393-335.
75 Fernandez 1989: 324.
76 Crozier 1908: 75.
77 Ibid.: 76.

the civil government as pompous and incompetent; he was particularly incensed that former Filipino insurgents were given posts in it. The book is relentlessly grim about the Philippines, calling its weather among the worst in the world and mocking Commission members for retreating by steamer to more temperate climates in Asia or the northern hemisphere whenever they fell ill. Bellairs saw 'the Filipino' as 'treacherous, cruel, and brutal'.[78] Taft took notice, writing to his brother Charles that Bellairs was an ex-criminal who had spent time in a Florida jail for writing bad cheques. 'His audacity and cheek, considering his record, in publishing such a book surpasses belief,' Taft wrote.[79]

But the commentators who may have given the most trouble to Taft and the Commission, aside from continued agitation by Mark Twain (1835-1910) and the American Anti-Imperialist League, were domestic Irish American editors of newsweeklies. Most of these 'race men' had argued passionately against annexation, seeing the United States as in danger of transforming into an imperial power like Great Britain. During the war they became convinced that US soldiers were deliberately desecrating Catholic churches.[80] After the war and during US governance of the islands, the biggest issue for the Irish American press centred around religious education.

In the nineteenth century, Americans, according to literature professor Susan K. Harris, imagined themselves as 'national Christians' with citizenship residing at the 'intersection of Protestant and national identities'.[81] Primary school readers and textbooks had long encouraged American youth to 'imagine his or her best self as the legatee of English Protestants who fled oppression, invented civil liberties, and created a national identity in which patriotism was inseparable from faith'.[82]

Anti-Catholicism, a long American tradition that peaked at mid-nineteenth century, was far from extinguished at century's end. Most mid-century domestic debates – and full-fledged riots – between Catholics and Protestants had been over public education, and the issue would flare up again in the Philippines. From the 1840s through the 1870s, American Catholics had charged that public school curricula in the United States were anti-Catholic and taught specifically Protestant religious views. The state, Irish Catholics argued, should financially support separate Catholic

78 Bellairs 1902: 218.

79 Letter from William Howard Taft to Charles P. Taft, 26 January 1903, box 1, p. 22, in the William H. Taft Papers, 1784-1973, Library of Congress, Washington, DC (henceforth: 'Taft Papers').

80 See Shott 2019: 69-70.

81 Harris 2011: 109.

82 Ibid.: 110.

schools.[83] A bitter fight between Protestants and Catholics over public education in New York City in 1840 and in Philadelphia in 1844 was followed by relative calm during the Civil War. Then, in 1868 in Cincinnati, Catholics challenged the reading of Protestant Bibles in schools. By 1869 cartoonist Thomas Nast (1840-1902) had begun skewering Tammany Hall and machine politician William Magear ('Boss') Tweed (1823-1878; Grand Sachem of Tammany Hall, 1858-1871) for corruption, and, instigated by Tweed's clandestine placement of a provision in a tax bill that provided funds for Church schools, Nast began his famous series of anti-popery cartoons. Catholics were seen as having a slavish mentality, mindlessly following the pope and thus threatening American democracy. Though much anti-Catholic agitating had died down by the 1890s, *The Menace*, an anti-Catholic publication published in Minnesota, would achieve a circulation of more than 1.5 million by 1915 – far more than many big-city newspapers.[84]

President McKinley's (in office 1897-1901) words to a group of Methodist Church leaders shortly after annexation must have worried the Irish; the president declared that the United States had an obligation to 'educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best we could by them'.[85] The Catholicism of Filipinos, apparently, did not count as real Christianity within America's ruling Protestant majority.

Taft's writings show religion as a recurring concern and important fault line in American identity and colonial governance. In a letter to his brother Charles a year and a half after the end of the war, Taft described a Filipino play performed for his entourage that was 'founded upon the rascalities and immoralities of the friars' and which was, to his surprise, 'applauded and applauded to the echo' by Filipino townspeople in attendance.[86] A few months before, Taft had optimistically told Elihu Root (1845-1937), then serving as Secretary of War (1899-1904), that the Aglipay movement and the Independent Filipina Church would grow and split the islands away from Rome. American missionaries, in fact, initially misinterpreted Filipino anger at the Catholic friars as readiness for conversion to Protestantism; Taft seemed savvier.[87]

83 Gjerde 2012: 144.

84 Nordstrom 2006: 10.

85 General James Fowler Rusling (1834-1918), 'Interview with President William McKinley', *The Christian Advocate,* 22 January 1903, 17, quoted in Harris 2011: 14-15.

86 Letter from William Howard Taft to Charles Taft, 26 January 1903, box 1, p. 8, in the Taft Papers.

87 Taft to Root, 22 November 1902, box 1, in the Taft Papers.

But if Taft saw religious developments as promising in the colony, pressure from the metropole was more frustrating. The Irish American press and Catholic newspapers, often one in the same, became convinced that the Commission government was trying to stamp out Catholicism, particularly in schools on the islands. Editors at the *Irish World*, *The Leader*, and other US Irish weeklies were incensed that no Catholics sat on the Schurman Commission (1899-1901), a five-man civil body in the Philippines, formed by President McKinley, that made recommendations on matters of governance and education. *The Monitor* of San Francisco wrote that Dean Worcester and Jacob Schurman (1854-1942) were known anti-Catholic bigots. The *Catholic World* agreed, claiming it had 'always said it was a mistake' to staff the Schurman Commission with men who had 'no Catholic sympathies'.[88] The commission recognized that the Philippines was overwhelmingly Catholic, but found primary education inadequate in the islands, with curricula often restricted to religious topics. The commission first tried to eliminate religious instruction altogether from public schools; Irish editors were incensed. Taft then attempted a compromise involving some supervised religious instruction of up to three times per week for students who requested it. When the superintendent of Manila schools removed crucifixes from classrooms, the Irish press objected again. After McKinley's assassination in September 1901, President Roosevelt inherited the problem and quickly appointed more Catholics to the school board and the Schurman Commission. Now, Taft wrote to Secretary Root in 1902, 'I should think that even the wildest Catholic editor ought to curb his fury against you and me'.[89]

Despite these moves, consistent and more vigorous opposition to empire was difficult for Irish Catholic editors for at least two reasons. One, during times of war, as with African Americans, Irish Catholic insecurity over the strength of their American belonging could translate into at least minimal support for military engagement. Father Peter C. Yorke (1864-1925) – an Irish Catholic priest who sat at the helm of his own personal press in San Francisco and who, like most other Irish Catholic editors, viewed the war as imperialistic – still agreed to engage in troop send-offs in San Francisco. Yorke was called upon to bless troops leaving San Francisco Bay in 1898 for the Philippines; in his scrapbook entry on 22 May 1898, Nicholson, who would set sail on the *City of Peking* for the Philippines, wrote that 'Father Yorke holds forth at headquarters, assisted by Father McKinnon the Chaplain.

88 *The Monitor*, 18 November 1899, and the *Catholic World*, August 1899, quoted in Reuter 1963: 368.

89 Letter from William Howard Taft to Elihu Root, 22 November 1902, box 1, in the Taft Papers.

Received orders at 9 p.m. that we would go in the morning. Boys cheering and all join in singing "The Star Spangled Banner".[90]

Second, already in the Spanish-American War in Cuba, Irish fears that anti-Spanish sentiment overlapped with anti-Catholicism had led many editors to defensively describe Spanish colonialism as a kinder, gentler affair than that practiced by Anglo-Saxons. Editors were pulled into defending the Church's past, which meant a partial embrace of a racialized, civilizing mission. 'Can the Indian Be Civilized?' one headline in the *Irish World* asked. 'Catholicity Is the Only Agency Capable of Solving the Indian Problem'. The article, by 'Father de Smet', praised Christopher Columbus as a 'missionary bearer of peace and truth', and the Catholic Church as a force that 'cured [Amerindians in South America] of their natural indolence and depraved habits'.[91] *Irish World* editorials, under the long editorship of Patrick Ford, tended to regard all non-whites, including the indigenous, in a racially egalitarian way. But even Ford could write with strains of Manifest Destiny when defending Catholicism. In the Philippines, Ford claimed, the Catholic Church had 'succeeded so well that the natives are thoroughly civilized instead of being wiped off the face of the earth' as in Hawaii, due to Protestant missionaries.[92] When the Associate Justice of the Philippine Supreme Court, James 'Jim' Smith (1859-1928; in office 1906-1909) was appointed governor-general of the Philippines on 20 September 1906, *The Monitor*, once edited by Father Yorke before he established his own newspaper, claimed the Catholic graduate of Santa Clara University would treat Filipinos as:

> equals in a Christian sense and not as an 'inferior' brood of mere 'niggers'. In this way he gets closer to the native and inspires a higher degree of confidence and respect. […] In brief, Governor Smith acts upon the enlightened and humane theory which has given the Spaniard unparalleled pre-eminence in the history of the civilization and Christianization of aboriginal savages.[93]

Conclusion: The Many Manifestations of Race

Black scholar and activist W.E.B. DuBois's formulation of African American 'double consciousness' – the 'sense of always looking at one's self through

90 Nicholson Scrapbooks, 22 May 1898, p. 15.
91 De Smet 1873.
92 *Irish World*, 14 October 1899.
93 *The Monitor*, 8 December 1906.

the eyes of others', particularly through the eyes of a dominant, anti-black society – is vital to understanding the intersection of race and nationalism in African American struggles for freedom. Yet other factors, including other races and religion, help construct race. The work of Ifeoma Kiddoe Nwankwo can help explain the difficult position of some African American soldiers and journalists with respect to British and US imperial efforts and may shed light on the Irish American position as well. Black soldiers' relationship to wars of empire can be compared to challenges faced by the ex-slave, writer, and statesman Frederick Douglass. 'As US consul to Haiti', Nwankwo writes,

> Douglass found himself in the awkward position of feeling a kinship with the Haitian people while charged with overseeing the US imperial enterprise of obtaining a part of Haiti for a military base. He had to balance being US American and US Negro, and also being US American and racial brother of the Haitian people – a 'twice-doubled' [...] consciousness.[94]

White US statesmen and businessmen feared Douglass would not strongly advocate for US interests in Haiti; Douglass had to argue simultaneously that he could gain concessions from Haiti but that the United States should not mistreat the nation. African American soldiers and journalists, like Douglass, attempted to balance and recalibrate national and global affinities. Efforts to appear patriotic and modern might involve distancing themselves from Filipinos. Yet, simultaneously, black soldiers and commentators noted parallels in the violent oppression faced by both African Americans and Filipinos.[95]

Even racist ideologies could be reassembled and redeployed for liberatory ends, or so many reformers hoped. The black journalist T. Thomas Fortune was likely adhering to certain tenets of race science when he wrote that Filipinos needed 'rejuvenation of blood'.[96] But even here he was advocating a cosmopolitan mix, a Manila group composed of 'the best Europeans', African Americans, and Filipinos, whom he thought might create a more just society in

94 Nwankwo 2005: 20-21.

95 Nwankwo's 'twice-doubled consciousness' does not imply 'false' consciousness; she states that Douglass's primary and admirable goal was for full US citizenship for African Americans and for him, 'the connection to the nation, or the desire for that connection, overwhelms all other linkages, including racial ones' (Nwankwo 2005: 152). The bind, the 'binaristic Blackness' Douglass experienced in his troubled relationship with Haiti, was 'an unintended consequence of his striving for a recognition of his humanity, equality, and US citizenship' (p. 141).

96 Fortune 1904b: 246.

the Islands.[97] *Ilustrados*, the elite Filipino anti-colonialists such as Isabelo de los Reyes (1864-1938) and T.H. Pardo de Tavera (1857-1925), similarly employed Orientalist and racialist discourses to create their version of 'the Filipino' – a race emerging from decaying Spanish civilization towards its own nationhood.[98]

Ironically, the same notions of white supremacy that underpinned the expansionist push of the White Man's Burden could be employed *against* the American project in the Philippines. The white soldier press – the 'Lions of Manila' in Commissioner Taft's formulation – chafed at Filipinization, the Commission's project of increasing the appointment of Filipinos to government positions. The Lions took white supremacy at its word, expecting only corruption and incompetence from a government increasingly staffed by a race believed to be inferior. From another angle, real affinities between 'black' and 'brown' could themselves be appropriated by the imperialists, as when the US military appeared to recognize that it could profit from greater trust between black soldiers and Filipinos.

Helen H. Jun's work demonstrates convincingly that Asian Americans and African Americans were defined racially at least in part in relationship to one another; Joshua Paddison adds religion as an additional factor informing racialized discussion of citizenship. Jun encourages scholars to break away from weighing the pronouncements of marginalized groups towards other such groups as 'racist' or 'anti-racist' and instead recommends exploring 'how the juridicial field of citizenship has consistently and coercively structured struggles and aspirations for national inclusion'.[99] Citizenship's political and legal manifestations overlap and influence, but do not collapse into, the broader definition of citizenship as a more socially felt and enacted sense of national belonging. In American history in particular, this is an important factor in judging, for example, Catholicism as a fault line in Irish American identity. Barbara Young Welke has pushed back at claims that religion was a major fault line in US citizenship; religion, she says, had less power than race, gender, or mental and physical ableness to exclude persons from citizenship in nineteenth-century America. The US Census, Welke writes, 'never inquired as to religious identity'; the First Amendment protected the free exercise of religion; and the Constitution forbade religious tests for office holding. 'Protestantism […] was not fundamental to individual legal capacity, to legal personhood, in the way that ability, race, and gender were.'[100] But religion and empire proved, in

97 Fortune 1903: 2268.
98 See Thomas 2012.
99 Jun 2011: 3.
100 Welke 2011: 11.

the Philippines, to be a minefield for the administrators of US power abroad. Scholars must continue to grapple with the complicated landscape of citizenship and race and its many related discourses of inclusion and exclusion.

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7 Warriors and Colonial Wars in Muslim Philippines Since 1800

Mesrob Vartavarian

Abstract
This chapter examines Muslim interactions with colonial and postcolonial Philippine states during protracted armed conflicts. Spanish, American and Christian Philippine state agents attempted to place Muslim peoples into frameworks that fit their respective colonial imaginaries. On encountering resistance, these imaginaries were set in motion and modified in ways that allowed Muslim elites and subalterns to obtain the resources necessary to advance their particular interests. Rather than viewing colonial wars in the Muslim zone as a continuous process of conquest and resistance, I shall show how different Muslim groups attempted to manoeuvre onto the right side of colonial violence. This chapter also places Philippine Muslim war bands in a comparative global context, drawing analogies with nineteenth-century raider polities in the American Southwest, the 'martial races' of British India, Palestinian resistance to Zionist settlement and warlord politics in contemporary Afghanistan.

Keywords: American imperialism, settler colonialism, race, Muslims, violence

This chapter examines Muslim interactions with colonial and postcolonial Philippine states during protracted armed conflicts. Spanish, American and Christian Philippine state agents attempted to place Muslim peoples into frameworks that fit their respective colonial imaginaries. On encountering resistance, these imaginaries were set in motion and modified in ways that allowed Muslim elites, and occasionally subalterns, to obtain the resources necessary to entrench or advance their particular interests. Rather than viewing colonial wars in the Muslim zone as a continuous process

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of conquest and resistance, I shall show how different Muslim groups attempted to manoeuvre onto the right side of colonial violence. This chapter also places Philippine Muslim war bands in a comparative global context, drawing analogies with nineteenth-century raider polities in the American Southwest, the 'marital races' of British India, Palestinian resistance to Zionist settlement and warlord politics in contemporary Afghanistan.

Warfare and Identity in Pre-Colonial Muslim Polities

Unlike the rest of the Philippines, southwestern Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago adhered to sociocultural practices typical to insular Southeast Asia.[1] Although Islam and its associated political institutions made strong inroads into the island world by the sixteenth century, power structures remained extremely fluid and intensely personal. The ability to accrue and disburse resources to client groups determined the stability of social hierarchies. Once patronage chains collapsed, power was redistributed and reconstituted by coercive means. Alliances with foreign traders provided the monetary, military and material inputs needed to sustain followings. Supra-local elites consolidated internal control via multiple exogenous resource flows. Local strongmen in turn utilized similar strategies to accumulate material and charismatic power.

The influx of European merchant companies into the eastern Indies after 1500 sharply increased the quantity of material resources on offer. Inter-European competition for high-value commodities and commercial trade routes allowed local rulers to play foreign interlopers off against each other and obtain lucrative deals. Yet, a fragmented geography and dispersed oceanic communities made it extremely difficult to funnel this wealth into a fixed number of polities.

The pre-colonial polities of the Muslim Philippines remained highly fragmented entities. At the regional level the various chieftainships and sultanates that ranged across the southern archipelago were never united under a single overarching authority. Beyond the fact that most of them shared a common faith, they frequently worked at cross purposes to one another and proved more than willing to unite with hostile Christian powers to their north and south against regional Muslim rivals. At the inter-polity level, these entities differed from one another in terms of their political structures and degrees of cohesion. All were segmentary raider states of a

1 Warren 2007.

kind but power dynamics differed according to geographical factors and access to high-value commodities.[2] The fortunes of sultanates waxed and waned with the rise and demise of charismatic leaders and shifting trade routes. Finally, long-term instability characterized intra-polity politics.[3] While systems of supra-local authority were strong enough to maintain political independence for several centuries after the Spanish colonization of the lowland Philippines, they were never durable enough to resist challenges from within. In addition, the existence of autonomous raider communities, the Iranun and Balangingi being the most formidable, created a ready supply of military labour available to the highest bidder.[4] When adequate remuneration for armed service was lacking, raider chiefs launched attacks against coastal communities on their own initiative, thereby accumulating substantial quantities of plunder and slaves. These combined factors allowed local strongmen to retain substantial concentrations of coercive and charismatic power. This power was deployed to assemble followings and carve out local zones of domination outside the effective reach of superordinate authorities.

Several centuries of intermittent conflict with Spanish colonial forces did not spur reactive territorial consolidation. Attempts by the Spaniards to conquer and convert the Muslim south were fiercely resisted, but external assaults were never threatening enough to override particularistic loyalties. *Datus* willingly traded with Christian ports and saw Spanish military campaigns in rival Muslim areas as opportunities to consolidate control over their own turf.

Scholars of pre-colonial Muslim polities have made broad demarcations between sultanates and chieftainships.[5] Sultanates ostensibly encompassed a clutch of localities while chieftainships seldom exercised power beyond a circumscribed area. Access to overseas commerce determined the success or failure of supra-local sultanates. The accumulation of resources through oceanic trade gave superordinate rulers the resources necessary to reward subordinate followers. Consequently, sultanates generally formed around coastal river mouths that controlled access to resource-rich interiors or on islands that straddled the Indonesian Archipelago and South China Sea.[6] The sultanates of Maguindanao[7] and Sulu were the most successful examples of

2 Warren 2007: xliii-xliv.

3 Beckett 1982: 395-396; Lara 2014: 29.

4 McKenna 1998: 77; Warren 2007: chap. 8.

5 Mednick 1974: 23-35.

6 Hayase 2007: 40-41.

7 The Maguindanao sultanate was one of several polities that originated along the Cotabato River basin in southwest Mindanao after 1500. For further discussion on relations between the

these two respective types. Chieftainships that lacked access to commercial networks were far more fragmented and consequently far less developed. The chieftains that held sway in the Lake Lanao region could not match the larger sultanates in terms of wealth; yet, their fragmented nature made them far more difficult to conquer.[8] Spanish pacification efforts would not gain ground in the Maranao areas until the end of the nineteenth century.[9]

The Maguindanao Sultanate proved far more adept at concentrating power around its rulers than the Sulu Sultanate later would. Maguindanao's exposure to European trading delegations in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries necessitated sumptuous court spectacles that held foreign dignitaries in awe.[10] The assemblage and subservient displays of *datus* at the sultan's court brought the local and supra-local into closer contact. Acting in unison to obtain favourable agreements with British and Dutch traders fostered greater cohesion. Maguindanao sultans utilized their strategic location to gain ascendancy over the inland sultanate of Buayan. Buayan's access to forest and upland products had to be channelled through ports controlled by Maguindanao. The latter also recruited European mercenaries who were hurled against inland rivals. Thus, Maguindanao's coastal court united oceanic and inland trade currents within itself.[11] Shifting commercial patterns in the late eighteenth century and Spanish suppression of slave raids during the mid-nineteenth century precipitated Maguindanao's long decline. Former geographic assets became liabilities as Spain's steam-driven gunboats were deployed to bring Maguindanao to heel. Court *datus* fell away and increasingly looked to their own interests. Upriver sultanates now came into their own.[12] Buayan made good the loss of Maguindanao-channelled slaves from the central and northern Philippines by accelerating the enslavement of its own upland peoples. Its more tenuous access to the sea made for less strict observation of seaborne Islamic doctrines. Buayan's rajas had little real power and would be dominated by their *orang besar* (strongmen), Datu Utto being the mightiest among them. For several decades, Datu Utto both tyrannized and mobilized his subjects to resist Spanish colonial expansion until he was finally overwhelmed in the late 1880s.[13] Spain's success owed as much to co-optation as to coercion.

Cotabato sultanates, see below.

8 Mednick 1965: 33-35.

9 Funtecha 1979: 4-6.

10 Laarhoven 1989.

11 Laarhoven 1989: 182.

12 Ileto 2007: 16.

13 Ileto 2007.

Compliant *datus* manifested symbolic subservience to foreign occupiers while continuing to accumulate autonomous power and advantage with little regard for grander colonial designs.[14]

The Sulu Sultanate assumed an increasing position of pre-eminence from the second half of the eighteenth century onward due to its semi-peripheral status in the Anglo-Chinese trade. English country traders from India eagerly procured the Sulu Zone's marine and forest products for the China market in exchange for manufactured goods and weaponry.[15] Greater political cohesion was needed among sultans and their *datus* to obtain the slave labour required to produce these highly coveted commodities. Ecological degradation and Maguindanao's decline also attracted military labour from Iranun communities based on the south-west coast of Mindanao. This combination of overseas demand for commodities and semi-mercenary armed service increased the prevalence of plantation slavery; yet, captives were also put to use as menials and armed retainers.

Despite this burgeoning commerce, Sulu's sultans never effectively centralized their power. The archipelagic nature of their polity meant *datus* could set up autonomous checkpoints to collect tribute and sell goods to foreign merchants without giving their sultan his due. The lucrative bird's nest caves on Borneo's north-east coast were theirs for the taking.[16] *Datus* even made separate deals with European traders on the roadstead of Jolo town, the sultanate's capital. Furthermore, sultans possessed nothing in terms of coercive capacity that was not readily available to local *datus*. A sultan could bestow legitimacy on a strongman's position through sacral acts, yet kingly sanctity could not tame a chieftain's secular might.[17] While oceanic trade increased the prominence of supra-local sultanates it did not fully eliminate the autonomy of *datus* within them.

Subaltern social orders that stood between slaves and *datus* led a precarious existence. The fact that raids and captivity were reserved for non-Muslim peoples gave common folk some solace, but few concrete benefits. Commoners could rise to high position, generally through military service, and mechanisms did exist to ennoble parvenus who proved clever enough to construct durable followings.[18] Most commoners, however, had to endure the violence and extortion that came with being ruled by a

14 Beckett 1982: 398-399.
15 Warren 2007.
16 Warren 2007: 76.
17 Kiefer 1972: 107-109.
18 Mednick 1974: 20-21; McKenna 1998: 55.

heavily armed warrior elite. Religion itself was harnessed to the cause of social stratification. As Islam gradually seeped into the southern Philippines during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, local *datus* accrued its powers to their persons. Most constructed elaborate *tarsilas* (genealogies) to claim they were direct descendants of the prophet Mohammed.[19] As God's vice-regent on earth, no man could inflict bodily harm on a *datu* without suffering grievous punishment in this world and the next. While clerics did play a role in Muslim communities, particularly after the acceleration of pilgrimage-related traffic between insular Southeast Asia and Arabia in the nineteenth century, religious questions were primarily decided by individual chieftains. Commoners could flee these overbearing masters, but this had its risks. Fellow *datus* often tracked down and returned runaways with the understanding that they could expect the same courtesy in return. Subaltern social groups explained their powerlessness by endowing *datus* with supernatural attributes beyond the reach of mere mortals. Muslim polities were not so much political communities as shifting coercive hierarchies.

Spanish authorities constructed more durable sectarian solidarities with their native subjects when facing a common 'Moro' threat. For example, the Muslim danger eased the passage of Pampangan elites into colonial service. This ethnic community, situated in the Central Luzon plains, provided Spanish authorities with military labour in exchange for officers' commissions, confirmation of property rights and an occasional encomienda.[20] Muslim raids also helped forge colonial connections with indigenous subaltern groups. By the eighteenth century, the Visayas and southern Luzon had become primary raiding zones for Muslim polities. Muslim fleets maintained a semi-permanent presence in the Guimaras Strait, cutting off Spain's western Visayan strongpoint at Iloilo from neighbouring islands. Efforts at combating raids through the construction of municipal fortifications were disrupted during Britain's occupation of Manila (1762-1764). Abandoned by secular state powers, Visayan and Bicolano peoples could do little more than flee for the hills and seek comfort from mendicant friars intrepid enough to remain among their flocks.[21] Economic interests favouring frontier

19 McKenna 1998: 270-272.

20 Larkin 1972: 27-28; Larkin 1993: 29. Pampangans manned something akin to a Spanish foreign legion in Asia, seeing service throughout Mindanao, Sulu, the Marianas, Maluku, and Vietnam (Larkin 1993: 29). Spaniards ascribed recruits from the Pampangan settlement of Macabebe with attributes typically found amongst martial races in multinational empires. Their loyalty to the Spanish cause made Macabebe martial ardour a necessary counterweight to the martial 'savagery' of unpacified Muslims tribes.

21 Cuesta 1980: 123-135; Owen 1984: 24-27; Larkin 1993: 37-38.

expansion coupled with maritime technological advances dissipated Muslim raids beginning in the 1830s. Spaniards and natives fought, fortified and prayed together.[22] Indigenous elites eager to open new lands to cash-crop cultivation willingly cooperated with Spanish endeavours. Deeper colonial connections with Christian Filipinos were premised on continuing Muslim demonization.[23]

Most current scholarship limits the comparative dimensions of pre-colonial Muslim Philippine polities to other maritime societies in Southeast Asia.[24] From this perspective, war bands based in Mindanao and Sulu were components of a vast mosaic of seafaring peoples found throughout the island world. Various sea peoples took up raiding as the surest means to socioeconomic accumulation. Warren's[25] recent attempts at globalizing the Sulu zone have emphasized divergence rather than convergence. His work sharply differentiates piratical settlements in the eighteenth-century Americas, where antisocial elements gathered and fragmented in an individuated fashion, from the communal raiding found in the Sulu Sea. Collective decisions by Southeast Asian seafaring communities to engage in raiding made for more cohesive war bands.[26] In addition, New World piratical pursuits never resulted in the ethnicization of marauder groups.[27] By contrast, vocation and ethnic identity went hand in hand across maritime Southeast Asia. Although such distinctions cannot be gainsaid, Southeast Asian scholars would profit from widening their range of comparison to land-based raider polities in other global zones.

Muslim maritime peoples bore a striking resemblance to raider groups in the American Southwest from the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries. Unlike complex societies found in Mesoamerica and the Andean highlands, indigenous communities across the Great Plains of North

22 Warring against Muslims became the stuff of subaltern legend. One Bicolano tale tells of a local hero who singlehandedly beat back boatloads of Moro raiders with the aid of a magical amulet, bringing back several hundred severed ears as proof of his deed (Owen 1984: 28-30).

23 Cuesta 1980: 157-160; Larkin 1993: 40. Visayan elites remained committed to Spanish rule until the eleventh hour of Emilio Aguinaldo's armed struggle (Larkin 1993). More recent work has also stressed the inroads made by Spanish officials and friars among the Lumads of Mindanao who allied with colonial agents in order to check Muslim raiding and tributary exactions (Paredes 2013).

24 Andaya 1993; Warren 2002; Andaya 2008.

25 2002: 1

26 Subject to common ecological and demographic pressures, groups transferred their livelihood from land to sea, fundamentally altering their collective identity in the process. In the Iranun's case, mid-eighteenth-century ecological decay pushed their able-bodied male population into extensive maritime raiding (Warren 2002, 2007).

27 The premier study of ethnicization in maritime Southeast Asia remains Andaya (2008).

American gained in power during the Colombian exchange. European horses and firearms resulted in mounted indigenous gunmen engaged in perennial raids. Eighteenth-century tribes in the American Southwest gradually converged to form formidable warrior confederations.[28] The Comanche Empire was the most successful manifestation of tribal coalescence via collective raiding.[29] Loot and human captives increased the prestige and manpower of competing warrior chieftains. Material goods accumulated in raids brought social mobility. Like the central Philippines, Mexico's northern provinces became part of the Comanche raiding zone. Local communities, bereft of any meaningful colonial assistance aside from occasional subventions to buy off marauders, had to come to their own defensive arrangements. Deepening local solidarities undermined colonial Mexico's transregional cohesion. Anti-Spanish rebellions in the early nineteenth century severely exacerbated social disintegration and rapidly accelerated Comanche raiding. US government officials took advantage of these attacks, viewing them as a means of weakening Mexican control over territories coveted by white settlers. Both maritime and mounted war bands sought mutually beneficial alliances with exogenous agents in order to increase indigenous control over raiding zones. Resources accumulated in peripheral raiding zones confirmed or recalibrated power relations in political cores.

The Sulu Sultanate and Comanche Empire followed parallel trajectories until their respective American colonial advents. The US seizure of south-western territories after the Texas Revolution (1835-1836) and Mexican-American War (1846-1848) resulted in an irreversible deluge of white settlers. White sovereignty replaced rather than exploited indigenous labour. Although some white settlement did occur in the Muslim Philippines, it never became the sine qua non of the colonial project. Rather, colonial administrators embedded a layer of American political organization over pre-existing Muslim traditions.

Establishing Imperial Linkages: Muslims under American Military Rule

The remainder of this chapter examines relations between American imperial personnel and indigenous Muslims in the southern Philippines from the colonial advent to the postcolonial present. American officials

28 DeLay 2008; Hämäläinen 2009.

29 Hämäläinen 2009.

initially established imperial linkages with Muslims that bypassed emerging political arrangements in core Christian areas. In ruling different Filipinos differently, Christian and non-Christian zones of the archipelago assumed separate developmental trajectories. Muslims were racialized and forcibly modernized, yet stood apart as a peripheral minority. Although sub-national imperial connections were severed after 1913, Muslims retained a memory of a distinct relationship with the United States that benefited local interests and contained government violence when the Americans returned to fight a war on terror at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

In his book *Policing America's Empire*, Alfred W. McCoy[30] delineates the modus operandi of American imperial domination across the globe. Imperial linkages between the United States and the Philippines, what McCoy calls the capillaries of empire, persisted well past formal decolonization. Through close involvement with Philippine security forces, American policymakers have maintained high levels of influence in an ostensibly independent country. When electoral inclinations veer the country in directions deemed unacceptable by national elites and American overseers, imperial directives and personnel are deployed through capillary connections to correct deviations. American dominance in the Philippines is thus more about underlying structures than discrete events.[31]

McCoy views contemporary events in the Muslim south as yet another arena in which imperial interests impose themselves on local concerns via structural conduits of dominance. The Manila-Washington nexus facilitates national violence in an impoverished sub-national periphery.[32] Yet, material and ideational flows do not only occur between national states. Sub-national elites and ethno-national minorities have also formed separate linkages with supra-national patrons. These links bypassed national concerns and developed according to distinct trajectories. Southern Muslims have long viewed imperial powers as both a menace and an opportunity. Their relationship with American colonizers and imperial interests have been detrimental in some instances while being beneficial in others. Such ambiguity has characterized Philippine-American relations in general; Muslim-American interactions, however, are ambiguous in their own way.

The Philippine struggle for independence and the subsequent Spanish-American War rapidly eroded whatever presence of authority the Spaniards

30 2009.

31 Vartavarian (2018) provides a more concise examination of the issues raised in the remainder of this chapter.

32 McCoy 2009: 511-515.

managed to establish in the Muslim south. Non-Muslim communities faced violent attacks as local strongmen reasserted control over strategic trade routes and towns. Faced with a massive insurgency in northern and central Philippines, American military commanders instituted a system of indirect rule in Muslims areas. The Bates Treaty, signed with the Sultan of Sulu in 1899, was coupled with a series of more informal agreements with local *datus* in south-west Mindanao. Suppression of the Philippine insurrection became a top priority and interference in Muslim affairs was kept at a minimum. Americans found the institution of slavery troubling but did not aggressively pursue its eradication. Slaves who managed to flee to American military lines were offered protection from pursuing *datus*, but officers were effectively prohibited from emancipating slaves residing on their masters' property. The containment of insurgent bands in the lowland Christian zones by 1902 allowed the colonial state to turn its attention southwards. American officials could no longer countenance the existence of autonomous armed chieftains acting as a law onto themselves. The immediate abolition of slavery provided an ideal pretext for the assertion of American sovereignty. Direct military rule was declared in Moro Province in 1903 and was to continue until 1913. The Bates Treaty was unilaterally abrogated in 1904. Such a brazen assault on traditional prerogatives sparked widespread armed resistance across the region. American army units responded with extreme violence, launching a series of counter-insurgency operations over the next decade.

Moro Province was administratively demarcated from the lowland Christian zones. It experienced a highly invasive form of colonial rule more akin to European colonies in Asia and Africa.[33] Administered by progressive army officers who had an intense aversion to the machine politics taking root further north, Muslim areas were subjected to intensive state-led modernization. The American military's antipathy towards electoral machines managed by self-serving political bosses had metropolitan origins. At the turn of the twentieth century, military officers struggled mightily to modernize America's armed forces by strengthening the regulatory and administrative powers of the federal government. Many officers felt modernization from above should also extend to wider segments of American society. In their view, rational bureaucracies committed to administrative procedures brought social improvement. Party machines that ran municipal and state governments fiercely defended their particularistic arrangements and privileges, often resorting to corruption to avoid federal interference

33 Abinales 2003: 148-149, 162. A similar form of colonial governance was imposed on Luzon's non-Christian highlands.

in local affairs. The military's struggle for progressive reform at home was far from complete by the time America seized the southern Philippines. Freed from domestic political constraints, army administrators pursued their progressive vision on the colonial periphery.

As in other colonies, infrastructural investments facilitated commerce and state control. Roads, harbours and market centres were quickly established to ease the flow of primary commodities. A series of schools were founded to spread the rudiments of technical education and the English language. Military authorities discarded Spanish-era confessional distinctions between Christians and Muslims and instead focused on the unique racial attributes of their Muslim charges.[34] As a thoroughly 'savage race', Moros required greater degrees of colonial tutelage to civilize them up to standards found among Christian Filipinos. Those who refused to modernize for their own good would be subjected to liberal applications of coercion.

Yet, American rule also created opportunities for advancement among Muslim elites and subalterns. The Bates Treaty was not just a stopgap measure temporarily imposed before the colonial state could fully assert itself. This interim allowed *datus* to size up their new masters in terms of coercive capabilities and commercial interests. Some chose to meet the fearsome firepower of these foreign invaders head on. Many, however, chose not to risk the consequences of open rebellion. Noticing an American distaste for slavery, certain *datus* branched out into other economic activities. Cockfighting, the production and sale of bladed weapons, cattle rustling, gold panning and human trafficking continued well into the American period. Colonial authorities turned a blind eye to these illicit ventures provided the *datus* engaging in them contributed to the peace and order of Moro Province.[35] The Americans were especially eager to form partnerships with *datus* able to mobilize commercial networks deemed necessary for agricultural development.[36] As Francisco Lara[37] has convincing demonstrated, it was not so much America's intention to divide and rule *datus* as to unite with the compliant in order to isolate the defiant. Crucially, colonial officials did not interfere with customary Islam. Concepts of the separation of church and state had carried over to the colonial sphere from the continental United States. *Datus* were allowed to maintain their hold over the faithful.[38] This

34 Amoroso 2003: 119-121, 125.
35 Lara 2014: 151.
36 Beckett 1982: 400, 402.
37 2014: 234.
38 Abinales 2000: 62-63.

gave less space to radicalized clerics who had imbibed more purist forms of belief overseas. Although so-called 'hajis' did cause colonial authorities some anxiety, they were never able to mobilize a critical mass of believers and launch a jihadi movement led by a clerical counter-elite.[39]

Sustained applications of American military power resulted in a sharp contraction of the *datu* elite, yet those who chose to play the military's colonial game became more powerful than ever before. Collaborating *datus* soaked up the resources and charisma of defeated rivals. The fluid hierarchies of the pre-colonial era were replaced by a fixed social order undergirded by colonial coercion. The establishment of tribal wardships, inspired by methods used to administer native peoples in the Southwestern United States, further expanded chiefly authority by allowing indigenous elites to dispense justice to their subjects.[40] In contrast to their British counterparts on the Malay Peninsula, the Americans empowered local strongmen to the detriment of supra-local monarchs.

Datu Piang, based in Cotabato, benefited greatly from these new power dynamics. As a Chinese mestizo of relatively humble origins, he needed foreign patronage to ascend the social hierarchy. Faced with a large-scale rebellion led by Datu Ali, heir apparent to the Buayan Sultanate, army commanders turned to Piang to provide assistance and intelligence. This information allowed American forces to corner and kill Ali in 1905.[41] Piang thus used colonial firepower to nullify the superior genealogical claims of a rival to rule the upriver polity. Once ensconced in his position as a colonial *datu*, he rapidly brought the Cotabato basin to order and reaped substantial profits from its buoyant agricultural sector.

Other parts of Moros Province proved far more difficult to pacify. The minor polities around Lake Lanao split into pro- and anti-American camps, with communities around the lake's northern shore demonstrating greater loyalty to colonial agents than their southern counterparts.[42] Maranao divisions prevented the coalescence of a unified resistance, but the lack of *orang besar* with trans-local authority made pacification a protracted process. As early as 1902, Captain John J. Pershing (1860-1948) met with

39 *Juramentados* (suicide attacks) on colonial officials did occur but were sporadic in nature and faded out over time (Kiefer 1972: 132-133). This was in sharp contrast to the situation in Dutch-occupied Aceh, where suicide attacks against colonial agents remained an embedded part of the indigenous socio-religious landscape until the end of Dutch rule in 1942.

40 Funtecha 1979: 41-43.

41 McKenna 1998: 94.

42 Lanao's northern shore had been exposed to greater contact with nearby Spanish settlements and was more accustomed to interactions with foreigners (Mednick 1965).

numerous *datus* in an effort to diffuse increasing resentment towards American rule.[43] Pershing attempted to widen the circle of compliance by utilizing *datus* who had already submitted to bring more hostile colleagues into the colonial fold. This was not always successful and numerous *kotas* (forts) that refused to submit were subsequently subjected to bombardment and assault. Once it became clear the Americans could not be defeated militarily, collaborating Maranao provided army and police units with valuable intelligence regarding rebel bands. At times, they even captured insurgents themselves and delivered them to the authorities. Banditry remained a concern nonetheless. Military units were deployed to destroy Maranao forts as late as the 1930s. Feuding and armed raids were eventually contained but never entirely eradicated.[44]

The Sulu Archipelago fiercely resisted the imposition of American sovereignty at certain points.[45] Military officials had little admiration or use for a severely weakened sultan and attempted to directly assert domination over local *datus*.[46] Piracy remained endemic and had to be suppressed by armed force. Colonial violence was particularly severe on Jolo Island where attempts to institute a poll tax led to the massacre of Bud Dajo in 1906. A campaign to disarm Moro communities led to another mass killing on Jolo at Bud Bagsak in 1913.[47] When encountering a porous border region with a long history of armed raids and illicit smuggling, the colonial state came down with a very heavy hand. Much like the Lanao region, however, these activities continued, albeit on a reduced scale.

The Sulu Zone's frontiers remained extremely porous. In 1915, the Manila government lodged a complaint with authorities in British North Borneo claiming that not enough was being done to prevent opium smuggling into the southern Philippines.[48] British authorities riposted that while they were doing all they could to interdict opium trafficking, ultimate responsibility for preventing the entry of contraband items lay with Philippine officials. America's anti-smuggling policy also intertwined with illegal Chinese immigration, as most opium dealers were profiled as Hong Kong Chinese based

43 Funtecha 1979: 24-26; Gowing 1983: 89.

44 Mednick 1965: 35-38.

45 Kiefer 1972: 4.

46 Sultan Jamal ul-Kiram II of Sulu (r. 1894-1936) refused to engage in any active opposition to American rule, allowing him to claim that he retained formal sovereignty over his domains even after the abrogation of the Bates Treaty. Nevertheless, the sultan was stripped of all powers except his religious authority in 1915 (Tarling 1978: 315).

47 Gowing 1983: 160-163, 238-242.

48 Tarling 1978: 307-308.

in North Borneo, often operating in concert with Muslim warlords. Colonial interdiction campaigns curtailed contraband items in some instances, but dealers easily re-routed illicit trade flows across poorly policed maritime borders.

Muslim resistance was both ominous and admirable to the American colonial imaginary. Provincial authorities made considerable efforts to institutionalize warrior traditions. Moro constabulary and Scout battalions were founded to assist in government pacification campaigns.[49] Ostensibly a diffusion of prior practices used to good effect in Christian provinces, Muslim military and police units possessed unique cultural features. Moro troops wore tasselled fezes in order not to impinge on their spiritual sensibilities. Constabulary units in Lanao bore the traditional kris along with the modern Krag. These martial accoutrements gave Muslims soldiers a distinct status. They also served barefoot to project a fierce countenance. Moro violence was thus not eliminated but regimented and yoked to colonial purposes. Once domesticated, this martial race could be safely displayed at festivals, exhibitions, and fairs.[50] Such voyeuristic exoticism was hardly dignifying. But Muslims gleaned substantial benefits from being branded a martial race.

Moros who served in military and police units typically came from the lowest rungs of the social order. During the chaotic colonial transition, numerous slaves had escaped their masters and eagerly filled the ranks of nascent coercive institutions. American commanding officers were viewed as powerful patrons who prevented a trooper's re-enslavement. Once slavery was formally abolished, Muslim soldiers zealously fought *datus* who refused to give up the practice. As counter-insurgency campaigns evolved, Moro constabulary units became particularly useful from a tactical point of view. American firepower easily obliterated rebel *kotas* and mountaintop fortifications. However, destroying fixed enemy positions disaggregated Muslim resistance into small roving bands against which heavy ordinance was useless. Locally recruited constabulary troops familiar with the physical and political landscape could more readily harry, capture or kill insurgents.[51] Moro soldiers were admired in areas beyond the colonial optic. Outside battlefields, barracks and exhibitions, young Muslim males aspired to become uniformed and regimented dealers in state violence.

Educational opportunities were also opened up to subaltern social orders. *Datus* who were highly suspicious of Western learning initially refused to

49 Funtecha 1979: 45-48.
50 Hawkins 2013: 51-52.
51 Funtecha 1979: 52-54, 121-124.

send their own children to colonial schools. They dispatched slave children instead, many of whom later went on to become teachers and bureaucrats.[52] Empowerment was possible for subalterns willing to help pacify the land.

According to American administrators, the tribes of Moro Province had to become modern while remaining Muslim. The racialization of religious difference made Muslim Filipinos an insoluble entity in relation to the rest of the archipelago. Preserving racial distinctions between Muslims and Christians justified the continuation of military rule.[53] Only the firm oversight of army officers could prevent communal violence and a Muslim regression back to savagery. It was never the Americans' intention to eliminate the natives, as was the case with indigenous peoples in the continental United States, only to civilize them.

Ironically, the very civilizing processes meant to lift Moros out of their benighted state rendered them vulnerable to displacement and marginalization in the long run.[54] Colonial efforts to impose a monopoly of legitimate violence were substantially carried out. Firearms were subject to seizure and fortified dwellings slated for systematic destruction. Banditry and raiding continued in more remote areas and the oceanic fringes of Moro Province. Yet, Muslims could no longer organize sustained resistance against supra-local authority. Even more damaging was an influx of Christian settlers from the northern archipelago.[55] Again, it was not the colonial government's intention to replace the natives with more civilized populations. Rather, American authorities felt that bringing Christians and Muslims closer together would facilitate a diffusion of more advanced civilizational norms from the former to the latter. Muslims would emulate the superior agricultural and governmental practices of their Christian Filipino neighbours. The best way to bring about social improvement was by example. American officials stood above this coalescing bi-national society, ensuring that inter-communal relations remained ordered and civil. Should they ever leave, it was claimed, a bloodbath would not be long in coming.

When placing the Philippine Muslim colonial experience in comparative perspective, one must move beyond typical analogies to indigenous peoples in the American West. As mentioned above, Muslim maritime communities bore strong similarities to south-western raider polities. Yet, American colonial rule in Mindanao and Sulu sharply diverged from settler

52 McKenna 1998: 312 n. 8.
53 Hawkins 2013: 47-48.
54 Abinales 2003: 169.
55 Funtecha 1979: 76-77.

colonial processes taking root soon after continental annexations. Closer analogies can be made with martial races constructed in British Indian colonial imaginaries. The Gurkhas, Sikhs and Pathans that made up an increasing proportion of Anglo-Indian armies in the aftermath of the 1857 rebellion received entitlements and privileges similar to those bestowed upon compliant Moros half a century later.[56] Martial valour displayed in pursuit of colonial pacification justified the retention of indigenous savagery, provided it was channelled into appropriately regimented forms. Although the Moros never became foreign legionaries to the extent of their British Indian counterparts, both groups elevated their local status through ascribed armed service.

From Sub-Colonialism to Marginalization

The year 1913 saw the Democrats return to the White House after nearly two decades of Republican rule. The Wilson administration sought to indigenize the Philippine state, thereby replacing direct colonial control with more circumspect imperial oversight. Military rule in Moro Province was abolished in 1913 and power increasingly handed over to Christian Filipino elites. These elites had continuously chafed under the restrictions imposed by their American masters with relation to Mindanao. They were eager to exploit this resource-rich frontier without unnecessary hindrances. Army officers attempted to resist this transition without success. The military's own institutional structures undermined efforts at retention. Frequent transfers of personnel at the district level prevented a critical mass of soldiers with administrative expertise in Muslim affairs from developing. America's growing involvement in the First World War also siphoned off many officers to Western Europe. Leonard Wood managed to fight an effective holding action in favour of retention of the Philippines during his governor-generalship (1921-1927). Having met Muslim resistance with ferocious violence during his rule in Moroland, Wood now stressed Christian Filipino misrule in Mindanao and Sulu.[57] The United States could not grant the Philippines autonomy for to do so would condemn its non-Christian peoples to majoritarian oppression. During his tenure he made at least two trips a year to the Muslim provinces and received nearly all Muslim leaders visiting Manila. Wood stressed the primordial hatreds that existed between

56 Streets 2004.

57 Benjamin 1971: 97-98.

the archipelago's Muslim and Christian communities.[58] An American exit would only trigger anarchy. Wood's unexpected death in 1927 cut short these regressionist tendencies. Shortly after taking power in 1933, the Roosevelt administration held firm to established Democratic Party policies and accelerated the Philippines's path to commonwealth status. Ultimately, army administrators were too thin on the ground to sustain their presence in a far-flung frontier that no longer interested policymakers in Washington.

At its core, relations between Philippine elites and American officials assumed an increasingly imperial rather than colonial quality. Once remade in America's image, indigenous elites could administer state institutions on their own. Regular elections at the local, provincial and national levels gave native officeholders sufficient legitimacy in American eyes. So long as they respected US military and strategic concerns in the Pacific, Filipino politicians were free to do as they saw fit with regard to domestic affairs. Christian Filipinos thus took up America's mission to civilize the 'savage'. Bereft of their American patrons and deprived of autonomous coercive power, Moro elites were compelled to reach an accommodation with their new overlords. The Muslim-American capillary thus lay dormant while Manila consolidated its own sub-colonial linkages with the Muslim provinces.

Manila ruled the Muslim south through an amalgam of colonial democracy and indirect rule.[59] The 1916 Jones Act allowed three powerful Muslims Filipinos to enter the national legislature. Hadji Butu, former prime minister of the Sulu Sultanate, entered the Senate while Datu Piang and Datu Benito of Lanao became representatives.[60] Direct access to national patronage assured control over their respective followings. Christian capital elites formed alliances with provincial strongmen who had a firm grip on their local constituencies. This spared a geographically remote central state from directly administering areas historically hostile to Christian rule. Muslim *datus* were co-opted and rewarded with material and political advantages in exchange for keeping order and delivering votes.[61] An expanding franchise made Philippine elections far more complicated affairs. The expense and organizational difficulties associated with mobilizing votes on behalf of national politicians were not easily resolved. Southern *datus* reinforced traditional notions of deference among their clients to construct reliable

58 Benjamin 1971: 100, 102.

59 The term 'colonial democracy' connotes a patronage-based machine politics constituted under American rule where votes were delivered for favours to supportive constituencies (Paredes 1988).

60 Benjamin 1971: 51.

61 Abinales 2000; Abinales 2003: 170-171.

vote banks rendered available to Manila politicians willing to pay the right premiums for them. The ensuing patronage flows from the centre to the periphery guaranteed a modicum of stability on a potentially turbulent frontier. Muslim subalterns received little in return for their votes. They became the primary victims of a sub-colonial democratic system that held them in thrall.

The Second World War rapidly accelerated strongman empowerment and subaltern exclusion. Chaotic conditions generated by the Japanese occupation released a steady stream of loose firearms into the countryside. This weaponry remilitarized the *datu* class in previously pacified areas and aggravated warlordism in locales never entirely brought to heel. Slave raids and clan feuds returned with a vengeance. Tens of thousands of Christian settlers were driven from their homes by Muslim militias who viewed them as a hostile foreign body. Traditional strongmen with modern weapons fought over turf and scarce resources. The central state proved unable to reassert its monopoly of organized violence after liberation. Electoral contests still determined the distribution of power but became far bloodier than before. Similar dynamics unfolded in the Christian provinces; yet, Mindanao retained a distinct historical trajectory. As the island had experience far less destruction than other parts of the archipelago, it was seen as the key to Philippine postwar recovery.[62]

Mindanao was thus subjected to unprecedented levels of centrally directed social engineering. Extreme privation brought on by the war had generated mass social movements calling for agrarian reform in northern and central Philippines. The Huk Rebellion was a profound challenge to the country's landed elite. Launched by communist and leftist groups during the Japanese occupation, Huk bands had expropriated lands belonging to various plantations and redistributed them to peasants. Government forces could not defeat insurgents in the field and desperately turned to their former colonial masters for assistance. Without such exogenous intervention, leftist currents might have taken the Philippines in a different direction, possibly even tilting the country towards the communist bloc. As it was, elite dependence on American patronage sustained capillary links between the United States and its former colony.

The ideational and material resources Washington injected into these capillaries exacerbated Muslim marginalization in Mindanao. Refurbishing the country's security forces was only half the battle. Agrarian grievances had to be diffused through distributional mechanism that did not threaten

62 Abinales 2000: 95.

the landed interests of pro-American elites. Mindanao was viewed as a safety valve that offered land to the landless through resettlement rather than revolution. The United States thus established and financed a series of resettlement programmes that rapidly shifted the demographic balance in favour of Christian migrants throughout south-western Mindanao.[63] Large-scale settlement continued until the late 1960s. Most of these settlers were desperately poor, a number being former Huk rebels. Muslim communities, generally lacking official title to ancestral lands, were deceived or driven off their holdings by Christian settlers. Emerging Christian political bosses formed tight links with their subaltern clients on the Mindanao frontier. Both groups proved equally eager to exploit untapped or underused lands. Since indigenous labour was not needed, Muslims became superfluous to these burgeoning settler communities. All Christians wanted was their land. Through this spatial transposition, the victims of agrarian inequities further north became victimizers in the far south.[64]

Muslim *datus* were complicit in Christian settlement. In exchange for keeping order in Muslim areas and not interfering with settler land grabs they were lavishly rewarded with national patronage. Datu Salipada Pendatun (1912-1985), who served both as a senator and congressman, spent more time politicking in Manila than among his own constituents in Cotabato. He willingly allowed pieces of his province to be sliced off and reformed into Christian majority territories,[65] thus crowding contentious Muslim elites into an ever smaller area. *Datus* intimated that only they could keep the Muslim masses in line, thus allowing settler transformation to continue.[66] Should their privileges be threatened in any way they might, unwillingly or deliberately, lose control. Such assumptions proved increasingly false as Muslim communities, all but abandoned by their traditional elites, turned to new political leaders touting an ethno-nationalist narrative. The groundswell of communal resentment would soon become too great to contain.

63 McKenna 1998: 113-114; Abinales 2000: 99.

64 This does not mean that Muslims did not engage in settler colonialism themselves. The Maguindanao had been displacing 'uncivilized' upland tribal groups since the imposition of American colonial rule. After the Second World War, Muslim *datus* took over most municipal offices in Tiruray areas. Tribal peoples reacted to Muslim settler incursions by retreating deeper into an increasingly crowded interior (Schlegel 1970: 4-5, 8, 25).

65 The province of South Cotabato was formed in 1966, followed by further territorial rearrangements after the declaration of martial law (23 September 1972) and Pendatun's subsequent political eclipse.

66 McKenna 1998: 137.

Political dynamics unfolded according to a different logic in the Sulu Archipelago. Here there were no Christian settlers in any appreciable numbers. Yet, the utter refusal of archipelagic peoples to accept Philippine national law and the infringements it placed on customary practices regarding private violence and clan feuds resulted in seething discontent. Residents were also extremely reluctant to surrender their firearms to state authorities for fear this would leave them exposed to their enemies.

Despite differences between archipelagic and mainland communities, common grievances bound Muslims across the south. The few initiatives for socioeconomic development that Manila bothered to initiate quickly fell under the control of Muslim elites who appropriated the necessary funds for their own benefit. Local education remained woefully under-resourced compared to the colonial period. Those who could obtain a higher education had to seek it in Manila or the Arab world, settings that only increased their sense of ethno-national difference. Nationalist Muslim Filipinos began to refer to themselves as 'Moros', a pejorative colonial term for 'savage' piratical raiders, now reimagined by educated elites to encompass and homogenize a highly diverse socio-religious community that stood apart from the archipelago's Christian majority. The Philippine state never promoted a counter-ideology to wean Muslims away from their poignant memories of their American overlords. Little wonder that when Thomas Kiefer was conducting ethnographic fieldwork among the Tausug on Jolo Island in the 1960s he was frequently asked when the Americans were coming back.[67]

The closest contemporary analogy to events in Muslim Mindanao can be found in Mandatory Palestine.[68] As in Moroland, a highly fraught triangular relationship between British colonial overlords, Zionist settlers and indigenous Arabs led to perennial armed conflict. Although British-Zionist

67 Kiefer 1972: 135.

68 As in the case of raiding, most comparative studies on Philippine Muslim separatism draw analogies within an exclusively Southeast Asian context. Che Man (1990) provides a comprehensive comparison between contemporary Muslim liberation movements in the southern Philippines and southern Thailand. Both areas experienced encroaching centralization and efforts at cultural dilution by dominant majorities adhering to different faiths. Yet, these insurgencies played out on altogether different scales. Southern Thailand experienced a low-intensity conflict that was effectively contained by strategic distributions of state patronage. Malay Muslim violence only escalated in the early twenty-first century when Thaksin's government tampered with peripheral patronage networks in an attempt to supplant monarchic power in the south. Furthermore, America's declaration of war on Islamic extremism after 9-11 led to greater radicalization in Thailand's Muslim south (McCargo 2008: 5-7). As elaborated on below, the main Muslim resistance movements in the southern Philippines avoided an extensive drift into radicalism after 9-11, obtaining substantial American civic action aid as a result.

relations were far from tranquil, Palestine's masters viewed and treated Jews as superior to Arabs. British authorities violently suppressed an Arab insurgency from 1936 to 1939, leaving Palestine's indigenous inhabitants politically fragmented and economically impoverished. Britain's hasty exit from Palestine in the aftermath of the Second World War allowed a well-organized Zionist movement to seize Arab lands and rapidly accelerate Jewish settlement. Zionist leaders also brought in Jewish survivors of the Nazi-directed Holocaust. This allowed continental European states to solve their respective Jewish questions by dumping the problem onto a distant territory.

Settlement was not solely facilitated by coercion. Long before Israel's establishment as a sovereign state in 1948, Zionist leaders had brokered alliances with Palestinian elites to facilitate Jewish immigration. Collaborating Arab elites eagerly sought Zionist political and material aid to assist them in fierce factional struggles for control of municipal office or tribal lands.[69] Certain Palestinian sheikhs maintained alliances with the Zionist state across the 1948 divide in exchange for further socioeconomic privileges. Their cooperation lubricated the settler project and hastened the dispossession of indigenous Arab communities throughout the 1950s and 1960s.[70] Yet, the Palestinian and Mindanaoan experiences began to diverge after 1970. Whereas Israel chose to push forward with Jewish settlement regardless of the consequences, Christian settlement in Mindanao generated levels of armed resistance effective enough to halt attempts at full-scale dispossession. Philippine elites came to understand that their Muslims would not eventually disappear.

Armed Separatism and State Violence

Ferdinand Marcos's rise to power finally tipped the Muslim south into full-scale rebellion.[71] Coming from the fringes of the national elite, Marcos owed little to traditional political conventions. He mobilized his kinsmen, university fraternity brothers, fellow Ilocanos and a spurious war record to break into Manila politics. First as a congressman, then as a senator, Marcos presented himself as a modernizer committed to making the Philippines one of Asia's leading lights. Upon winning the presidency in late 1965, he

69 Cohen 2008.
70 Cohen 2010.
71 Abinales 2000: 155-157, 159.

lost no time undoing established arrangements. State institutions played a key role in his proposed socioeconomic transformations. Technocrats and military officers were tasked with centralizing power into Marcos's hands.

Regional strongmen with autonomous control over manpower and resources were naturally viewed with suspicion. Marcos thus began to dismantle the political networks of hostile Muslim *datus*. Salipada Pendantun was among the first to fall; others soon followed. This created a political vacuum filled by ethno-nationalist political leaders who had forged linkages with sympathetic governments across the Muslim world. Military aid and training provided by Libya and Malaysia led to the coalescence of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).[72] The MNLF called on Muslims to separate from the Philippines and found their own independent state. Marcos used separatist threats and a growing communist insurgency as a justification for declaring martial law in September 1972. The military launched brutal attacks on Muslim rebel camps throughout the south, only deepening Moro resentment and widening the insurgency in the process. State violence gave the MNLF greater legitimacy in areas initially hostile to the organization's mainly Tausug leadership. Maguindanao politicians and clan chiefs in the Cotabato basin joined up to obtain access to the weaponry and financing provided by the MNLF's foreign patrons. As a result, Manila had to conduct combat operations across the Sulu Archipelago and southern Mindanao simultaneously. This placed further strains on an already overstretched military.

The Moro conflict was a major drain on the martial law state. At its height, the conflict was costing Marcos a million dollars a day.[73] After suffering heavy losses, MNLF commanders shifted tactics from the defence of fixed positions to more mobile partisan operations. Porous coastal frontiers prevented government forces from interdicting the flow of arms to insurgent bands. Ordinary Muslims found little inspiration in Moro nationalist pronouncements but fought fiercely to protect their communities and families from the Philippine military's depredations.[74] Faced with a stalemate, Marcos was compelled to sign the Tripoli Agreement in 1976, which promised some form of future Muslim autonomy. He then proceeded to divide the resistance

72 Mustapha Harun (1918-1995), strongman ruler of Sabah state (1963-1975), allowed the flow of arms through and maintenance of training camps on his turf in order to aid his fellow Tausugs. The Malaysian federal government chose to turn a blind eye to these activities as Tun Razak required Sabah's support in constructing the Barisan Nasional coalition formed in 1973 (Noble 1977: 208).

73 Abinales and Amoroso 2017: 217.

74 McKenna 1998: 272-275.

against itself by co-opting traditional *datus* into his government and enticing certain rebel commanders to abandon the separatist cause in exchange for state patronage. The conflict waned in intensity but did not end. New insurgent organizations, the Mindanao-based Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) being the most prominent, broke away from and soon overshadowed the MNLF. Insurgent and state violence led to the development of heavily armed family clans that carved out lucrative rackets and fought for whichever side served their interests best.[75] It became impossible to establish clear boundaries between insurgency, counter-insurgency and criminality.

American support massively contributed to Marcos's state centralization and peripheral aggression. His rise coincided with the American military build-up in Indochina. American bases at Clark Field and Subic Bay were essential to the Second Indochina War's prosecution. The Nixon administration fully backed Marcos's bid for re-election in 1969 and declaration of martial law in 1972. A progressive withdrawal of American forces only intensified Washington's commitment to the regime. As Indochina succumbed to communism, its neighbours had to be inoculated from infection. Ever increasing quantities of aid were pumped through imperial capillaries to shore up America's faithful ally. The Philippines received $18.5 million in military aid in 1972 and $45.3 million the following year.[76] The Soviet Union's strengthening alliance with a united communist Vietnam after 1975 was matched by an expanding American commitment to an authoritarian Philippines. The Iranian Revolution and Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1979 strengthened America's need for a backdoor to the Indian Ocean. President Carter's human rights administration provided Marcos with $500 million in military assistance. Without these external infusions the Moro conflict might have been far less destructive.

Both insurgents and state actors plugged into their respective transnational networks to obtain the resources necessary to wage war in the southern Philippines. This conventional conflict resulted in an intractable stalemate. Due to Cold War concerns, Marcos was able to consistently increase the flow of assistance from his American patrons. This influx allowed him to fragment, but never entirely eradicate, the resistance by offering alternate sources of patronage to rebel commanders previously reliant on largess from the wider Islamic world.[77]

75 Lara 2014: 86, 95.

76 Abinales and Amoroso 2017: 209, 211.

77 Imelda Marcos's personal diplomacy to Muammar Gaddafi's Libya also succeeded in curtailing assistance to the insurgents (Wurfel 1988: 184).

Reactivating Imperial Capillaries

The end of the Cold War saw the United States quickly lose interest in the Philippines. America's support for Marcos generated popular resentment which led to the closure of Clark Field and Subic Bay in 1992. Imperial linkages lay dormant as American interests shifted elsewhere. NATO expansion, security spats with China and North Korea, and the punishment of rogue states occupied the United States military during the 1990s. President George W. Bush's declaration of a war on terror after the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington suddenly revived interest in the Philippines. By early 2002, US special operations forces, embedded in Philippine military units, began counter-terror operations against Islamic groups in the Muslim south. Their primary target was the Abu Sayyaf group, purportedly a propagator of fundamentalist doctrines but in actuality more akin to an armed gang engaged in extortion, kidnapping and robbery. Although American troops did not officially engage Islamist groups in combat, they provided the intelligence, training and surveillance that facilitated armed encounters between insurgents and Philippine troops. Joint US-Philippine military exercises, meant to deter growing Chinese involvement in Southeast Asia, also ramped up as the twenty-first century progressed.

These developments have been viewed by both activists and scholars as an infringement on Philippine sovereignty. Aware of the potential political fallout from a re-establishment of military bases on Philippine soil, American policymakers opted for the introduction of small special operations forces that could be rapidly inserted into insurgent zones.[78] Counter-terrorism was only a partial explanation for US intervention. The war against radical Islam justified continual imperial oversight across the Philippine Archipelago, a highly strategic area in America's efforts to contain a rising China. In exchange for allowing American involvement in Philippine military affairs, Manila has received substantial infusions of military aid and a free hand in dealing with leftist activists whose progressive politics threaten elite interests.

Yet, this reactivation of imperial capillaries had another side. Patricio Abinales[79] makes a strong case for refocusing scholarly attention on American intervention from the national to the regional. Sub-national imperial connections were revived beyond the Washington-Manila nexus. Both ordinary and elite Muslims in the south gleaned substantial benefits from

78 McCoy 2009: 514-515.

79 2010.

America's return. Hashim Salamat, leader of the MILF, played a leading role in initiating imperial reconnection. Shortly before his death in 2003, Salamat wrote a letter to President Bush in which he defined the MILF as a 'national liberation organization' and urged the United States to help mediate a peace settlement to the separatist conflict.[80] Salamat thus circumvented Washington-Manila capillaries to form a direct link with the White House, effectively reactivating a separate Muslim-American relationship. Upon openly renouncing terror, the MILF was made a full partner in the peace process. More importantly, the US did not subject the MILF to counter-insurgency operations and instead focused its attention on the far smaller and more marginal Abu Sayyaf group.

The United States Agency for International Development began to deliver much needed aid to impoverished Muslim areas and assist in the reintegration of former insurgents into civilian society. Local *datus* took advantage of an improving civil infrastructure to expand commercial activities and reward their followings.[81] These social inputs came directly from American personnel, bypassing the whims of imperial Manila. The MILF leadership marginalized jihadist members and assumed an increasingly moderate stance towards the Philippine government when the benefits of imperial patronage became clear. As in the colonial period, elites were co-opted to imperial projects via the distribution of patronage. Ordinary Muslims in Mindanao appreciated American advisers redirecting Philippine military violence away from their communities and against Islamist groups based in the Sulu Zone.[82] This porous frontier remained disordered, but residents proved willing to help hunt down extremists that preyed on their villages and challenged the dominance of local clans unwilling to relinquish lucrative smuggling routes to jihadi groups. Rather than resist foreign interlopers, clan leaders manoeuvred onto the right side of American violence. The presence of American military personnel, interposed between Muslims villages and Philippine soldiers, often prevented excesses. All this made American involvement in the southern Philippines far less costly and relatively more successful than interventions in the Middle East. Indigenous agency had rearranged capillary linkages to local and imperial benefit.

Muslim resilience altered the conflict in Mindanao and Sulu into a situation comparable with warlordism in contemporary Afghanistan. Afghan warlords, mainly but by no means exclusively concentrated in the Pashtun east, tapped into transnational networks to mobilize material support from

80 Quimpo 2016: 70-71.
81 Abinales 2010: 186-189, 209.
82 Hawkins 2013: 137.

co-ethnics to prosecute anti-colonial insurgencies.[83] American intelligence agencies also supported Afghan insurgents across porous frontiers during the Soviet occupation, allowing the US to reactivate linkages with allied warlord clans when it occupied the country after 9-11. Exogenous support for local and regional warlords has severely weakened the reach of the central state. This has compelled Kabul to co-opt and accommodate various warlord chieftains by allowing them to conduct illicit economic activities and accepting their de facto provincial autonomy.[84] While warlords in the Muslim Philippines are far more dependent on presidential patronage than their Afghan counterparts, Manila can do very little in Mindanao and Sulu without the cooperation of its strongmen.[85] Certain warlords can be toppled when they go too far, as the Amapatuan clan was, but warlordism remains embedded in the political landscape. Moves in recent years towards devolution in the Muslim south have only confirmed warlord power and privilege.

Conclusion

The capillaries of empire are more than fixed structures that facilitate American domination of the Philippines. This imperial circuitry has been repeatedly re-routed across the archipelago to serve national and sub-national interests. Upon their initial entry, the Americans chose to rule different Filipinos differently. They established separate connective links in Christian and non-Christian zones that operated according distinct logics. These separate colonial streams were to merge once the 'savage tribes' achieved a level of civilization comparable to Christians. Yet, contradictions soon crept in. US military officials attempted to retain the Muslim south but were eventually compelled to surrender their charges to Christian rule when Washington decided to sever sub-national imperial linkages. Manila treated the south as a sub-colonial zone within the American empire. Independence in 1946 only increased Muslim dispossession as Christian settlers radically transformed the landscape. Marginalization led to insurrection and further impoverishment. Finding few benefits in national rule, Muslims eagerly (re)formed associations

83 Barfield 2010: 233-270.

84 Mukhopadhyay 2014.

85 The proliferation of heavily militarized warlord clans throughout Muslim Mindanao, coupled with the attenuation of Christian territorial settlement, have made southwest Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago more alike. Aspects of archipelagic and river basin convergence have yet to be interrogated properly.

with American agents when geopolitical interests necessitated imperial return. Supra-national patronage proved beneficial to numerous localities and hence these capillary links have been sustained through Muslim initiative. Rather than being resisted, empire was taken advantage of.

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Chronology of Major Events and Conflicts in Southeast Asia, 1800-1900

1799: The Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, VOC) goes bankrupt and its assets are taken over by the Batavian Republic.

1803-1837: The Padri War in Sumatra. The religiously conservative Padris wage war against the traditional aristocratic elite of Sumatran society, and this provides the pretext for Dutch intervention in Sumatran politics.

1811-1816: Britain occupies Java as a result of the Anglo-Dutch-French conflict during the Napoleonic Wars in Europe.

1819: Stamford Raffles with the aid of William Farquhar negotiates with the Temenggong of Johor and manages to acquire Singapore for the British East India Company in return for the EIC's support of the Johor ruler Raja Hussein Shah.

1819: Dutch expedition against Palembang, Sumatra.

1821: The first American ship arrives in Siam, bearing letters of introduction from the President of the United States addressed to the ruler of the kingdom.

1821: Second Dutch expedition against Palembang, leading to the Sultan of Palembang accepting Dutch demands.

1823: Stamford Raffles issues an ordinance which became the basis of the credit system of migration that brought Chinese migrants into the colonies.

1823: Dutch expedition against the Chinese community in Pontianak, Borneo.

1824: The Anglo-Dutch Treaty draws a line along the Straits of Malacca and divides Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula into Dutch- and British-controlled territories.

1824-1825: First Bone War: Dutch confront the forces of Bone in South Sulawesi.

1824-1826: The First Anglo-Burmese War: Britain conquers Arakan and Tennesserim.

1825-1830: The Java War. The Javanese leader Prince Diponegoro leads his troops against the Dutch in a protracted war across central and east Java that lasts five years before he is betrayed and captured.

1826: The Straits Settlements are created by the British East India Company, bringing together the colonies of Penang, Malacca and Singapore under centralized control.

1826: Anglo-Siamese Treaty: The British sign a treaty with Siam (Thailand) to ensure that Thai forces would not venture south of the northern Malay states of Perlis, Kelantan, Trengganu and Kedah.

1831: The Dutch attack Baros, Singkil and Tapus in West Sumatra.

1832: The American frigate USS *Potomac* bombards the Sumatran port settlement of Kuala Batu.

1833: America establishes formal relations with Siam.

1835: The US Navy establishes the East India Squadron, which is given the task of protecting American shipping between China and Southeast Asia.

1837: American missionaries led by William Dean set up the first Protestant church in Siam, in the capital of Bangkok.

1838-1839: The American warships USS *Colombia* and USS *John Adams* bombard the Sumatran port settlements of Kuala Batu and Meukek.

1839-1842: The First Opium War.

1844: America and the Chinese Empire sign the Wanghia Treaty

1845-1846: The First Anglo-Sikh War.

1846-1848: The Mexican-American War: By 1848, America's borders stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast, and America now has direct access to the Pacific Ocean.

1846: Brunei is attacked by the British Navy as a part of the 'war on piracy'. Brunei's defeat leads to the loss of Sarawak and North Borneo as well as the island of Labuan, and Brunei is forced to sign the Treaty of Friendship with Great Britain.

1846: Failed Dutch intervention in Bali.

1848: Failed Dutch intervention in Bali.

1848-1849: The Second Anglo-Sikh War.

1849: Dutch intervention in Bali, ending with the Dutch occupation of Bululeng and Jembrana.

1850: America signs the Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Commerce and Navigation with the kingdom of Brunei.

1852-1853: The Second Anglo-Burmese War: Britain conquers the Burmese Irrawaddy River delta and captures Rangoon. The Burmese royal family is forced to move to Mandalay.

1854: Dutch attack on the Chinese community in Montrado, Borneo.

1855: Treaty of Commerce and Friendship between Siam and Britain.

1856: Treaty of Commerce and Friendship between Siam and France.

1856-1860: The Second Opium War. In 1858, the Chinese government is forced to sign the Treaty of Tientsin, which favoured Britain, France, Russia and the United States – all of which were then able to export freely into China.

1857: The Indian Revolt: The British East India Company suffers a revolt among its Indian troops, leading to the temporary paralysis of the company across North India.

1858: Dutch intervention in Bali.

1858: French forces under the command of Admiral Charles de Genouilly attack Da Nang.

1859: French forces under the command of Admiral Charles de Genouilly capture the city of Saigon.

1859-1860: Second Bone War. Dutch confront the forces of Bone in Sulawesi, culminating with the Dutch capture of Watampone.

1859-1863: Banjarmasin War in Southern Borneo between the forces of Banjarmasin and the Dutch.

1861-1874: The Larut Wars of succession in Perak involving Malay rulers with the backing of Chinese secret societies provide the pretext for British intervention into Malay affairs.

1862: The defeated Vietnamese are forced to sign the Treaty of Saigon with the French, opening the way for French intervention and Catholic missionary activity.

1863: Cambodia becomes a French protectorate.

1866-1873: The civil war in Selangor provides the justification for British intervention in Selangor's politics.

1867: Siam acknowledges the French protectorate over Cambodia and received the two western provinces of Cambodia in return.

1867: Demise of the British East India Company.

1867: Control of the Straits Settlements is passed to the Colonial Office in London.

1868: The US Navy's East India Squadron and Pacific Squadron are merged to create the US Navy's Asiatic Squadron.

1870s: Britain's 'forward movement' into the Malay kingdoms of the Malay Peninsula begins. Following British intervention at the end of the Selangor Civil War of 1866-1873, the Selangor Tin Mining Concession was given in 1873 to allow for more foreign capital penetration into the Selangor tin mining areas.

1871: The Anglo-Dutch Treaty leads to the further separation of the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra.

1873: Aceh War begins: The Dutch launch their first offensive against Aceh, in a war that would last for more than three decades.

1874: The Pangkor Treaty between the British and the ruler of Perak introduces the system of indirect colonial rule as a British Resident is attached to the court of Perak, advising the Malay ruler.

1874: The Perak revolt begins as a result of Britain's indirect interference in the politics of the kingdom of Perak, Malay Peninsula.

1875: British colonial Resident James W.W. Birch is killed in Perak.

1877: The Chinese protectorate system is introduced in Singapore to monitor and control the migration of Chinese workers to Singapore and the rest of the Straits Settlements as well as the Malay kingdoms.

1879: Following the end of the American Civil War, the decorated war hero General Ulysses S. Grant visits Siam on his tour around the world.

1882: The North Borneo Chartered Company is created to manage the territory of North Borneo, which was given as a concession by the kingdom of Brunei.

1882: José Rizal returns to the Philippines, after which the Spanish banish him to Mindanao. Andrés Bonifacio founds the secret nationalistic brotherhood Katipúnan to fight the Spanish.

1883: Annam becomes a French protectorate.

1885: The Third Anglo-Burmese War: Britain invades the north of Burma and captures Mandalay, deposing King Mindon, who is forced to abdicate his throne and is sent into exile in India.

1885: The Jambi uprising in Jambi, southern Sumatra.

1886: The British depose Sultan Abdullah of Perak, who was subsequently sent into exile.

1887: The French colonial authorities bring together the territories of Tonkin, Annam, Cochinchina and Cambodia, creating French Indochina.

1887: José Rizal's *Noli Me Tángere* (Touch me not) is published in Germany and smuggled into the Philippines, where it sparks national consciousness and revolutionary fervour.

1888: The Pahang Treaty: As in the 1874 Pangkor Treaty that was signed by Sultan Abdullah of Perak with the British, the 1888 treaty between Pahang and the British meant that henceforth Sultan Ahmad Shah would be forced to accept the presence of a colonial Resident appointed to his court.

1890: American naval officer and historian Alfred T. Mahan publishes the highly influential book *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783.* Mahan calls for a strong American navy, and for the United States to take possession of the Caribbean, Hawaii, and the Philippines, as well as the creation of a canal connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

1890: The British ban all Chinese Societies – including registered ones – in the Straits Settlements.

1891-1895: The Pahang Civil War.

1893: The Franco-Siamese War, or Paknam Incident. France's desire to expand the territory of Indochina leads to a conflict with Siam, and the war culminates with the defeat of Siam.

1893: The Lao territories east of the Mekong become part of French Indochina after they were ceded by Siam.

1894: The Mat Salleh uprising begins in North Borneo.

1894: The American Standard Oil Company opens its first office in Bangkok and begins its operations in Siam.

1895: Cuban rebel groups declare war against Spain.

1896: The formation of the Federated Malay States (FMS), bringing together Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Pahang.

1896: Anglo-French Declaration. Mutual agreement to respect the territorial integrity of the kingdom of Siam within the boundaries of the plain of the Chaopraya River.

1896: Civil and armed campaign for independence from Spanish rule begins in the Philippines. Emilio Aguinaldo and Filipino forces capture Cavite. José Rizal is executed by the Spanish (30 December).

1897: First Royal Durbar in Kuala Kangsar, Perak, hosted by Sultan Idris at the behest of the British authorities.

1897: Filipino officers vote to abolish the Katipúnan and establish an independent Philippine republic with Aguinaldo as president. Bonifacio is captured and executed by Aguinaldo. Aguinaldo signs armistice with Spain.

1898: The Spanish-American War leads to the loss of several colonies under Spanish rule and paves the way for American intervention in Spanish-ruled Philippines.

1899-1902: The Philippine-American War begins with the Battle of Manila (1899). The war comes to an end in 1902 and the US Congress passes the Philippine Organic Act. American forces continue to the face resistance from the Moro Muslims in the southern Philippines up to the 1910s.

1903: Kerinchi expedition: Dutch colonial forces attack Kerinchi in West Sumatra.

1904-1905: The Russo-Japanese War excites Asian nationalists.

1906: First Battle of Bud Dajo (Moro Crater Massacre). US forces attack Moro rebels on Jolo, killing women and children.

1913: Battle of Bud Bagsak: US General John Pershing attacks and annihilates the Moros defending Mount Bagsak in Jolo, Sulu.

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